

**THE INVOLVEMENT OF EXTERNAL POWERS
IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD OF THE SRI LANKAN
ETHNIC CONFLICT (2009-2012)**

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ABSTRACT

This essay specifically focuses on how the conflicting and competing interests of regional and extra-regional powers shape or affect the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. It offers a nuanced understanding of the contemporary Sri Lankan ethnic conflict in the context of external engagement. Looking at the historical background of the conflict, and cognizant of neo-realist and democratic peace theories, it explains why the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict still defies solution. Taking an audit of the Sri Lankan peace process, it elucidates how the shift in the global distribution of power upset the balance of power between the parties in Sri Lanka and led to the Eelam War-IV. Analysing the last phase of the war, it explains how the Sri Lankan Government managed to defeat the 'invincible' military force, the LTTE with the diplomatic, economic, and military supports of major powers. It assesses prospects of peace in post-war Sri Lanka in relation to external engagements. It finally argues that without concerted international pressure, Sri Lanka seems a most unlikely candidate for achieving positive peace. It ultimately makes some recommendations to the protagonists to the conflict as well as to the international community.

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DECLARATION

I, Meenadchisundram Sivapalan, declare that

- i. This is my original work.*
- ii. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.*
- iii. The data and other information, sourced from other writers, are in every case specifically acknowledged.*

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Signature

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Date

ABBREVIATIONS

DDC	District Development Council
EPRLF	Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front
EROS	Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students
EU	European Union
FP	Federal Party
IPKF	Indian Peace Keeping Force
ISI	Inter-Service Intelligence
JVP	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front)
LRRP	Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol
LSSP	Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Lanka Equal Society Party)
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MEP	Mahajana Eksath Perammuna (People's United Front)
NAM	Non-aligned Movement
PA	People's Alliance
PLOTE	People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam
RAW	Research and Analysing Wing of India
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
SC	Security Council
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SU	Sinhala Urumaya (Sinhala Heritage)
TELO	Tamil Eelam Liberation Front
TNA	Tamil National Alliance
UK	United Kingdom
UF	United Front
UN	United Nations
UNF	United National Front
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Commission
UNP	United National Party
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
US	United States of America

Introduction

1.1. Overview & Significance of the Study

Sri Lanka, a small island lying like a pendant at the extreme southern tip of India, has been called the ‘pearl of the Indian Ocean’ (Tambiah 1991:1). The island, colonised by the Portuguese, Dutch, and British successively, gained its independence without bloodshed in 1948 (Wilson 2000). Power was transferred to the Sri Lankan people, the majority of whom are Sinhalese, peacefully and amicably. However, the post-independence era has been characterized by conflict. Sinhalese leaders

Figure 1: Map of Sri Lanka



systematically marginalised the Tamils, who subsequently responded with passive resistance followed by armed struggle (Winslow & Woost 2004). According to UN Panel of Experts Report (2011), Sri Lanka has ceased to be a genuine liberal democracy. As a result, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), an armed movement of the Tamils, waged a conventional military campaign against the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) over three decades in a bid to reinstate the basic fundamental rights of the Tamils. The GoSL finally crushed the LTTE in May 2009 (Harrison 2012). The root causes of the conflict are still unaddressed. Ethnic tension still prevails in Sri Lanka.

The competition among regional and global powers for supremacy in the Indian Ocean region tremendously affects political events in Sri Lanka because of its strategic geographical location in the region. In the context of the ongoing ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, the opportunities for acquiring influence in Sri Lanka for the major powers have increased. As such, these powers try to influence the resolution of the conflict in such a way that each of their own conflicting interests in the region are advanced, or at least not undermined (Sornarajah 2008). In short, Sri Lanka has become a virtual playing ground for major powers in their strategic game in the region.

China's disregard for human rights in the pursuit of its strategic objectives is well known (Suryanarayan 2012). With its callous regard for human rights, it forges a web of closer economic, political and military ties with Sri Lanka. It extends diplomatic support to Sri Lanka and shields Sri Lanka from western criticism on its human rights record in major international forums. By building ports in the littoral states of the Indian Ocean, China has been actively constructing a 'string of pearls' in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) to secure its oil supply and to position itself as a countervailing presence to the US naval hegemony in the sea lines of communications (Samaranayake 2011). With the construction of a massive Chinese-funded port at Hambantota in southern Sri Lanka, it is viewed that China has acquired a new pearl in its string (see figure 2). Indian defense analysts believe that China has launched a concerted effort to encircle India by moving into the IOR, an area where China has not exercised a sphere of influence (Keethaponcalan 2011). Rattled by the growing Chinese maritime and economic interests in Sri Lanka, other players in the region step up their efforts to checkmate China.

Figure 2: String of Pearls and Chinese Oil Supply Route



Concerned about its own political and strategic interests, India wants to ensure that the internal ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka does not spill across the borders into the southern region of India, where a large number of Tamils with a similar cultural, historical, linguistic and social background live. At the same time, it is also keen to ensure that Trincomalee or any other ports in Sri Lanka would not be made available for military use by any country in a manner prejudicial to Indian interests. Compelled by its strategic interests, India tries to maintain a good neighbourly relationship with Sri Lanka at any cost. In order to maintain such a relation and curb the growing Chinese influence in the region, India has increased its

economic support for Sri Lanka. It also shields Sri Lanka in international forums from western criticism (Keethaponcalan 2011). Although Tamil Nadu, a southern Indian state applies constant pressure on the Indian central government to find an amicable solution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, the central government never allowed Tamil Nadu to shape or determine the nature of its response. More importantly, India takes a stance that favours the Singhala government rather than the oppressed Tamils in Sri Lanka (Keethaponcalan 2011).

Moreover, India is reluctant to push Mahinda Rajapakse, the President of Sri Lanka too hard, since it worries that he would end up more sympathetic to Chinese interests. On the other hand, Sri Lanka plays China off against India and gets the maximum from both powers. Despite its warming ties with the US, India is wary of Washington's own strategic goal in the IOR. To send a strong signal to Sri Lanka and to curb Chinese influence in Sri Lanka, India finally watered down and supported the US-backed resolution against Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council –UNHRC (Singh 2012). While expressing its staunch support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, India called upon the Government of Sri Lanka to implement its own findings and recommendations made in its report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) with regard to information on missing persons and detainees. It also called for the investigation of cases of disappearances and abductions, the promotion of trilingual policy, reduction of high security zones, demilitarization, withdrawal of armed forces from civilian life, restoration of civilian administration in the Tamil majority Northern Province and devolution of power (The Sunday Times, 2012).

The US tries to prevent the emergence of regional powers adverse to its interests. To advance its interest and curb the ever-growing Chinese influence in Sri Lanka, the US has taken up the human rights issue against Sri Lanka. There are signs that the West is gearing up for action to hold Sri Lanka accountable for alleged war crimes committed by its forces at the end of the civil war against the Tamils in 2009. Since Canada, Britain, USA, France, Germany, Norway and Australia have large, well-organised and articulate Sri Lankan Tamil populations, these countries are consistently calling Sri Lanka to investigate all allegations of crimes committed by its forces. They also urge the Sri Lankan government to find an amicable solution to the ethnic conflict by devolving powers to the Tamils and by reforming the state (Lunstead 2011).

Moreover, on 22 March 2012 the US-sponsored and Western-backed resolution on Sri Lanka was passed at the UNHRC. The resolution calls upon Sri Lanka to implement its own findings and recommendations made in its report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC). It also calls to initiate credible and independent actions to ensure justice, equity, accountability and reconciliation for all Sri Lankans (Pattanaik 2012). However, the US needs India as a counterweight to China. As a result, the US is cultivating a strategic partnership with India. When it comes to Sri Lanka, the US is forging with India, the regional power, a new relationship, characterised by a considerable degree of openness and transparency. While supportive of peace building efforts in Sri Lanka, the US largely defers to India as the lead outside actor (Lunstead 2011). With reference to the resolution of the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict, the US expects India to take a lead role.

Sri Lanka has condemned the resolution and demonstrated its lack of interest in implementing its own findings and recommendations. Thereby, the Sri Lankan government has squandered yet another opportunity to steer the country in the path of peace. Above all, Sri Lanka is reorienting its external relations away from the West and more towards Asia and the Middle East (Uyangoda 2010; Rajapakse 2012). Ever since it gained victory over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in May 2009, the Sri Lankan government has done nothing to address the root causes of the conflict or redress the legitimate grievances of the Tamils.

Having been emboldened by the economic, military and diplomatic support of China, the Government of Sri Lanka has suspended the peace talks with the Tamil National Alliance, a powerful Sri Lankan Tamil political alliance in the country. While resisting external pressures for conflict resolution, reconciliation, decentralization, and devolution, the Sri Lankan government is moving in the opposite direction, in the path of centralizing its power (Uyangoda 2010). There is no sign of ending the oppression and alienation of the Tamils. This unpalatable situation will further accentuate the ethnic and linguistic divide, and eventually spawn the Tamil separatist movement again in the country.

Given the gravity of the problem, this study specifically focuses on how the conflicting and competing interests of regional and extra-regional powers shape or affect the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. The cardinal objective of the study is to offer a nuanced understanding of the contemporary ethnic conflict in the context of external engagement. More importantly, it

prescribes an appropriate negotiated settlement to the conflict in accordance with the changing contextual conditions on the ground. It also recommends ways of normalising relations with the international community in the wake of the resolution passed at the UNHRC. Taken as a whole, it aims to provide a deep insight into the contemporary Sri Lankan ethnic conflict in relation to external engagements. By doing so, it adds to a growing body of literature on the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka in narrowing the knowledge gap in the field.

The three core issues this study investigates are: 1) how the conflicting and competing interests of external powers influence the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka; 2) how Sri Lanka resists external pressure for conflict resolution, reconciliation, democracy and devolution; and 3) how Sri Lanka manages her ethnic conflict in order to deal with external pressure.

This study is, therefore, aimed at finding answers to the following key questions: 1) What measures do external powers (and especially the major players) take to bring Sri Lanka into their own sphere of influence? 2) How do external powers pressurize Sri Lanka in major international forums? 3) What measures does Sri Lanka take to resist external pressure for justice, equity, accountability and reconciliation? 4) How does the Sri Lankan strategy in relation to external powers influence the ethnic conflict?

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter one begins with an overview of the study and describes its significance. While reviewing the literature in the field, it describes the core academic theories underpinning the dynamics of the research and briefly explains the research methodology. Chapter two offers the historical background of the conflict. Chapter three provides a comprehensive analysis of the Sri Lankan Peace Talks facilitated by the Royal Norwegian Government. Chapter four explicitly explains how the Sri Lankan Government managed to defeat the ‘invincible’ military force, the LTTE with the diplomatic, economic, and military support of major powers. Chapter five analyses the prospects of peace in great detail in the post-war Sri Lanka in relation to external engagements. Finally, chapter six points out that the Sri Lankan Government will not offer the Tamils an acceptable, dignified solution without continuous, collective pressure from the international community. To realize positive peace in Sri Lanka, the study makes some policy recommendations to the protagonists to the conflict as well as to the international community.

1.2. Literature Review

Many analysts have shed light on the internationalization of the Sri Lankan peace process between 2002 and 2008. For example, Noyahr (2006) analyses the unprecedented involvement of the international community during the Norwegian-facilitated peace process between 2001 and 2004 from an Indian vantage point. More especially, he looks at the work of the Co-Chairs of the Sri Lankan peace process, the European Union, United States, Japan and Norway, and their sustained effort to build an international safety net to allay the fears in the South of Sri Lanka that the Tigers would renege. Commending the efforts of the Co-Chairs, he asserts that they did whatever was necessary to prevent either party from going backward. He also suggests that since India had a vested interest in Sri Lanka, it should have been actively incorporated into the peace process. Sharing a similar viewpoint with him, Ram (2006) further asserts that India would become more important than one could imagine today in guaranteeing the future of Sri Lanka as one country with its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Sri Lankan Tamil analysts are largely critical of the excessive internationalization of the peace process. Balasingham (2004), Ponnampalam (2006), Rudrakumaran (2006), Sivaram (2006), Sornarajah (2006) and Vinothini (2006) argue that the Co-Chairs, by building an international safety net, upset the balance of forces to the disadvantage of the LTTE. More importantly, Ponnampalam (2006) points out that the Co-Chairs' wrong perception of the LTTE as hell-bent on the creation of a separate state resulted in an unbalanced pro-state approach. He also states that the international community failed to recognize that the Sinhalese majoritarian hegemony was the greatest stumbling block to reaching a settlement (Ponnampalam 2006). At the same time, Sinhalese writers also castigate the excessive internationalization of the peace process for entirely different reasons. Fernando (2006), Peris (2006), Goonetilleke (2006), and Weerakoon (2006) blamed the policy of appeasement adopted by sections of the international community towards the LTTE for the increase on the violations of the ceasefire agreement. While echoing their views, Seneviratna & Endaragalla (2006) argue that excessive international involvement and their rendering political recognition to the LTTE infringed on the sovereignty of Sri Lanka and became a threat to the territorial integrity of the country.

The findings of Goodhand & Walton (2009), Goodhand & Korf (2011), Hoglund & Svensson (2009), Lewis (2010), and Uyangoda (2011) all are significant to this study. These researchers, however, focus mainly on the aspect of the liberal peace building facilitated by Norway with the support of the international community. They largely look at why the liberal peace building project failed in Sri Lanka. While blaming the failure of the project on deficiencies in its execution and the recalcitrance of the people involved, Goodhand & Walton (2009) and Goodhand & Korf (2011) stress defects in the project itself. They also assert that the failure of the liberal peace building project has let loose Sinhalese nationalist forces in the country and paved the way for the war which totally defeated the LTTE. Sharing a similar viewpoint with them, Lewis further argues that “the increased influence of rising powers, particularly China, in global governance mechanisms, and their impact on international norms related to conflict management” have thwarted the liberal peace building project in Sri Lanka, which was undertaken by Norway (2010:647).

While many researchers focus on the liberal peace building project between 2002 and 2006, few assessed the role of India in the peace process. For example, Bandara (2008), Keethaponcalan (2011), and Liyanage (2008) unearth what factors determined India’s limited role during the peace process between 2002 and 2006. They also analyse her position and attitude towards the subsequent war for peace. In their analyses, they argue that India seemingly followed a hands-off policy in terms of the peace process. They discovered that three of the fundamental reasons for India choosing to remain aloof were: (1) the past experience of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka, (2) the killing of Rajiv Gandhi and (3) the proscription of the LTTE in India (Bandara 2008; Keethaponcalan 2011; Liyanage 2008). More importantly, Keethaponcalan (2011) argues that despite its verbal support for the peace process, India was working behind the scene to undermine the process. Owing to its fears, concerns and interests, and also its view about the LTTE, Keethaponcalan asserts that “India collaborated very closely with the ultra-nationalist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna that was in the forefront of the movement against the peace process” (2011:78). He further states that in the immediate aftermath of the collapsed peace process, India became a silent partner with the Sri Lankan government during the last phase of the war, called ‘Eelam War-IV’ due to historic, regional-political, and economic reasons. In light of the military defeat of the LTTE, Keethaponcalan (2011) predicts that India would push for a political solution for the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict.

In addition to the studies discussed above, some researchers have focused on the Chinese involvement in Sri Lanka. For example, de Alwis (2010) discusses the evolving economic, political, and military relationship between China and Sri Lanka during and after the war. In his final analysis, he paints a dismal picture about the future of the country as there is the possibility of Sri Lanka being dragged into the conflict between China and India. He also asserts that the government of Sri Lanka elicited the help of the Indians and Chinese to get rid of the LTTE, and “now these two countries have annexed the entire island –the Chinese have taken the South and the northern half has gone to the Indians” (de Alwis 2010:442). In contrast, Samaranayake (2011) argues that despite deepening ties with China, Sri Lanka is neither bandwagoning with nor balancing China.

In addition to the studies discussed above, some researchers have focused on excessive US engagement in the Sri Lankan peace process. For example, Lunstead (2011) explains why the pattern of limited US engagement with the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict changed dramatically with the start of the new peace process in 2001. He argues that this enhanced engagement was not due to any sudden change in US strategic interests in Sri Lanka but rather due to a combination of other factors: a) the atmosphere after the 9/11 attack, which ushered in a new determination by the US to confront terrorism on a global scale; b) the coincidental election in Sri Lanka of a United National Front (UNF) government led by Ranil Wickremasinghe that was strikingly pro-West and pro-free market; and c) the personal interest of the then-Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage (Lunstead 2011). He goes on to argue that “the substantial US involvement in the early days of the peace process was unique, and far surpassed US strategic interests in Sri Lanka” (Lunstead 2011:104). He asserts that the US has no significant strategic interests in Sri Lanka since its interests are concentrated in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan (Lunstead 2011). Sharing a similar viewpoint with him, Sornarajah (2008) stresses that the geographic importance of Sri Lanka to the US may not be too great, but proposes that the US will have an interest in Sri Lanka since it is intent on countering the emergence of China in the IOR.

It is clear that there is an abundance of literature focusing on the internationalization of the Sri Lankan peace process, the Norwegian mediation and its liberal peace building agenda, Indian involvement in the peace and war, the role of China in Sri Lanka, and the US engagement in the peace process. There is virtually nothing, however, being documented on how external factors shape or affect the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, especially after the

military defeat of the Tigers in May 2009. Although there were some articles concentrating on the Sri Lankan relationship with regional and extra-regional powers in the distant past, they compromised academic objectivity and neutrality. In other words, they were subtly advancing their sectarian standpoints with carefully-crafted words. Moreover, those studies focused on the period before the end of the war (Lewis 2010; Uyangoda 2011). Since then much political water has flowed under the bridge of the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict. This warrants a fresh analysis and theoretically-rigorous research to inform debate and deepen the understanding of the external factors in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict. In order to fill this knowledge gap, the current research specifically focuses on how the conflicting and competing interests of regional and extra-regional powers shape or affect the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. In this respect, this study stands unique.

The author, moreover, is a Sri Lankan Tamil, who was involved in the ethnic conflict and who participated in the Sri Lankan peace delegations. The latter included almost all the rounds of the Norwegian facilitated peace talks, held in various capitals – Bangkok, Berlin, Bern, Oslo and Tokyo and attendance at Sri Lanka's Donor Conferences in Oslo and Tokyo. As such, the author witnessed how the representatives of the international community interacted with Sri Lanka in relation to the ethnic conflict. These experiences have motivated the current research.

Despite its comprehensiveness, this study has several limitations. First, Sri Lanka remains a politically volatile part of the world and the situation on the ground can change quickly. Hence, the findings of any study cannot be set in stone. Second, owing to practical and financial constraints, the research has been conducted from South Africa without visiting the area, subjected to the study albeit that the researcher is Sri Lankan. Third, this study primarily looks at the role of the major powers such as India, China and the US, thereby negating the role of minor actors such as Iran, Pakistan, Myanmar, Malaysia, Japan, Canada, and the UK. Fourth, the author's personal experience may affect objectivity and neutrality. Nonetheless, while it is important to acknowledge these weaknesses, they do not detract from the value of this study. Indeed, this study gives a deep and original insight into the contemporary Sri Lankan ethnic conflict in relation to external engagements. It also recommends ways of normalizing the relations with the international community in the wake of the resolution passed at the UNHRC. Moreover, the lessons and insights provided by this

study build our understanding of effective conflict settlement practices in democratic, developing countries and add to a growing body of literature in the field.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

“Neo-Realism” and “Democratic Peace Theory” are particularly relevant theories to conceptualise the dynamics of my research area. More particularly, neo-realism is a status-quo oriented, problem-solving theory. It explains the role of actors, values, issues and power arrangement in the international system. It focuses on security issues and is concerned with issues of power and survival (Dunne & Schmidt 2006; Lamy 2006).

For neo-realists, states are self-interest oriented and rational actors, selecting strategies to maximize benefits and minimize losses (Lamy 2006). States view all other states as potential enemies and threats to their national security. This distrust and fear creates a security dilemma, and this motivates the policies of most states (Lamy 2006). This standpoint would help one to understand why China, India, and the US adopt different, distinctive and competing policies towards Sri Lanka, a strategically significant country in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Moreover, it would enable one to comprehend why Sri Lanka is reorienting its external relations away from the West and more towards Asia in general and China in particular. Furthermore, neo-realists mainly look at how power is distributed in the international system. For them, power is more than the accumulation of military resources. They see “power as the combined capabilities of a state” (Lamy 2006:209). Since anarchy defines the international system, neo-realists argue that all states are functionally similar units, and experience the same constraints presented by anarchy and maintain their position in the system. They explain any differences in policy by differences in power or capabilities (Lamy 2006). This explains how Sri Lanka, a small country, by building strong ties with China and other Asian countries, is countering the Western pressure for human rights, accountability, democracy, and the resolution of the ethnic conflict. The above-mentioned assumptions of neo-realism allow this researcher to look at the way the security concern of each major player in the region shapes the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict.

On the other hand, democratic peace theory describes building peace by strengthening democracy. The proponents of the theory argue that “democracies are more likely to settle mutual conflicts of interest short of the threat or use of any military force” (Baylis 2006:309).

They also argue that democracies settle their differences and disagreements by mediation, negotiation, or other forms of peaceful diplomacy (Baylis 2006).

Moreover, the proponents of democratic peace theory argue that “mature democracies have the best record for handling internal conflict non-violently” (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall 2011:280). The criteria for the identification of mature democracies include the following prerequisites: two or more political parties; periodic and constitutionally required elections; separation of powers with genuinely independent executive, judiciary and legislative branches of government; free press and freedom of expression; absence of political prisoners; and a functioning pluralist civil society (Couloumbis & Kentikelenis 2007). More importantly, democratic peace theory argues that mature democracies uphold human rights, pluralism, and the rule of law, and accommodate ethnic diversity through various forms of regional and local autonomy (Baylis 2006; Ramsbotham et al. 2011). Nevertheless, democratic peace theory does not focus on the system level. It concentrates on the state level (Baylis 2006). Therefore, neo-realism is the most appropriate theory to conceptualise the dynamics of the research area as it focuses on the system level (Lamy 2006).

Three specific concepts have been chosen to explore the three cardinal objectives of this study. The first concept is the security concern of states. Here, Kenneth Waltz’s discussion on how states protect themselves and promote their interests is engaged. Looking at the concept from a neo-realist perspective, Waltz argues that security is the central concern of states and they strive to maintain their position by selecting various strategies (Beckman 1995; Lamy 2006). Since Sri Lanka is situated in a strategically important position in the IOR, it is of paramount importance to the security of India, China and the US. Therefore, these big players have opted to take various measures to ensure their national security and interests. As a result, they try to use the ongoing ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka to their own advantage. Therefore, his concept provides a theoretical framework to assess how the conflicting and competing interests of external powers shape or affect the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

Second, the author considers John Mearsheimer’s suggestion that “small countries should pursue security policies that weaken their potential enemies and increase their power relative to all others” (2003:138). Mearsheimer, in using a neo-realist perspective, advocates that “a small country should respond to anarchy and the resulting security dilemma by joining alliances and taking an activist role in regional and international organizations, seeking to

control the arms race” (2003:138). As opposed to a major power, he argues that a small country would hardly pursue a unilateral strategy of increasing military strength to protect and secure its interests. He posits that small countries are most likely involved in building alliances with major powers (Lamy 2006). Since Sri Lanka is a small country with limited resources, the concept of Mearsheimer (described above) offers an alternative analytical tool to explain how Sri Lanka resists external pressure for conflict resolution, reconciliation, democracy and devolution.

Third, the author considers the issue of the balance of power. Here, Waltz’s discussion of how the balance of power pushes states towards negotiation and compromise for the satisfaction of their interests. Waltz looks at the concept from a neo-realist perspective. He argues that the balance of power between states limits their behaviour because they cannot be sure that the aggressive promotion of their interests would bring success. Since the war between balanced forces is more likely to end up in a stalemate, he posits that states resort to negotiation (Beckman 1995). China, India and the US employ various strategies to bring Sri Lanka under their sphere of influence. Although India and the US have differences, both have a common interest of curtailing the growing influence of China in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, to a considerable extent, both India and the US work in tandem to keep China out of Sri Lanka, by pressurising the Sri Lankan government to find an amicable solution to the conflict. In contrast, China helps Sri Lanka to defy Indian and American pressure to find a negotiated settlement to the ethnic conflict. If both India and the US can contain the growing influence of China in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan government is more likely to take a conciliatory approach towards the ethnic conflict. Therefore, his concept provides another theoretical framework to explain how Sri Lanka is managing her ethnic conflict in order to deal with external pressure.

1.4. Research Methodology

This is a qualitative, literature-based study which relies totally on books, journal articles, published papers, newspaper articles, and the official statements and speeches of the political leaders and state officials of Sri Lanka, India, China, and the US. By analysing these relevant scholarly and non-scholarly documents, this study provides some deep insight into the contemporary Sri Lankan ethnic conflict in relation to external engagements and proposes an appropriate solution to the protracted ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka in accordance with the

changing contextual conditions on the ground. It also uses these data to recommend ways of normalising relations with the international community in the wake of the resolution passed at the UNHRC.

The Sri Lankan Ethnic Conflict

2.1. Historical Background to the Ethnic Conflict

With an area of 25,332 square miles, Sri Lanka is a small island of nearly nineteen million people (Herath 2002). It is a pluralistic society consisting both poly-ethnic and multi-religious communities. According to the last all-island decadal census taken in 1981, the population comprised nearly 74 percent Sinhalese, 12.7 percent Sri Lankan Tamils, 5.5 percent Indian Tamils, 7 percent Moors

Figure 3: India-Sri Lanka Map



(Muslims), and 0.6 percent Burghers, Malays, and Veddhas (Wilson 2000). This author uses ‘Sinhalese’ and ‘Sinhala’ specifically to refer to the majority community and their language respectively. Moreover, ‘Tamils’ is used to refer to the predominant minority, the Sri Lankan Tamils and their language.

The Indian Tamils, who were brought by the British in the 1840s and 1850s to work on tea plantations, are largely settled in the central hills of the island. Despite their substantial contribution to the economy, they still remain the least educated and most marginalised society on the island. They, however, have not been directly involved in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict (Winslow & Woost 2004). The ancestors of the Moors migrated primarily as traders from South India from the tenth century on. They are largely settled along the littoral of the island and also significantly in the Eastern Province, which the Tamils claim as part of their traditional homeland (Balasingham 2004). This has triggered tension between the Moors and Tamils in recent decades. Even though their language is Tamil, Islam defines their ethnic identity (Wilson 2000). Thus, nearly 25 percent of the country’s population speaks Tamil.

Figure 4: Provincial Map of Sri Lanka



The Burghers were originally Dutch settlers (from Holland), who came to work for the Dutch East India Company. Nowadays, the name broadly refers to other European descendants as well. Following independence, most of them emigrated to Europe and Australia (Balasingham 2004). In terms of religion, over ninety percent of the Sinhalese are Buddhists, while over ninety percent of the Tamils are Hindus. The Moors and Malays are Muslims, while the Burghers are Christians. The Christian population of the island consists of both Sinhalese and Tamils; but Hindu Sinhalese and Buddhist

Tamils are rare. According to the 1981 census, the country's religious population is composed of 69.3 percent Buddhist, 15.5 percent Hindu, 7.6 percent Christian, and 7.5 percent Muslim (Wilson 2000).

Both the Sinhalese and the Tamils claim to be the original settlers of the island. On the one hand, the Sinhalese claim that their North Indian Aryan ancestors were the first to set foot on the island almost 2,500 years ago (Herath 2002). To support their claim, they point to a mythical account in the *Mahavamsa*, a historical chronicle written in the sixth century C.E. and updated in later periods. According to this myth the founder of the Sinhalese race, Prince Vijaya, after being exiled by his father arrived on the island with seven hundred followers. "The myth provides a fantastic ancestry for Vijaya by claiming a leonine progenitor" (DeVotta 2004:25). It also claims that the prince landed on the island at the same time that Lord Buddha passed away, thereby creating the notion that the island was destined to be a Buddhist sanctuary. Most Sinhalese accept the Vijaya myth as indisputable history (Gunasingam 2004). This laid the foundation for the contemporary conflict in the island.

On the other hand, the Tamils claim that their Dravidian South Indian ancestors were the first settlers on the island. As just a twenty-two mile stretch of water (of the shallow Palk Strait)

separates the island from the southern coast of India, it is highly likely that South Indians were the first settlers on the island (see figure 3). Some even claim that only Dravidians settled the island and that Buddhism and its Pali scriptures led to a cleavage, dividing the early settlers into Sinhalese and Tamils (Tambiah 1991). Like the Vijaya myth, the story of the Buddhist warrior king Dutthagamani (second century B.C.E) in the *Mahavamsa* states that both the Sinhalese and Tamils are traditional enemies. The story in the *Mahavamsa* describes how the Sinhalese King Dutthagamani defeated the Chola King Elara (Tamil). Despite being defeated by the Sinhalese king, the King Elara was actually supported by many Buddhist rulers (Gunasingam 2008). King Elara enjoyed substantial support from Buddhist monks and people. There were no historical records of ethnic clashes between both communities. This fact questions the story that both communities are traditional enemies. It appears that both communities had cordial relations in the early historical period (Tambiah 1991).

The Sinhalese had developed “a distinct consciousness of themselves as a people by at least the tenth century C.E” (DeVotta 2004:27). This consciousness emanated largely from the Buddhist religion, its culture, and the numerous invasions and occupation of the island by the Cholas in the eleventh century. These South Indian invasions helped consolidate Sinhalese group identity. It was only after the advent of colonialism, however, that “the Sinhalese consciousness underwent a radical transformation” (DeVotta 2004:27). Thereafter, the relationship between both communities soured.

Before the advent of colonialism in the early sixteenth century, there were three kingdoms existing on the island: the Jaffna Kingdom (Tamil) in the North, the Kotte Kingdom (Sinhalese) in the Southwest, and the Kandyan Kingdom (Sinhalese) in the central hill region (see figure 4). The island was successively colonised by the Portuguese (1505-1658), the Dutch (1658-1796), and the British (1796-1948) (Herath 2002; Wickramasinghe 2006). When the Portuguese first landed on the island, they witnessed two distinct communities of people with different cultures living separately as two different nations, ruled by their own kings. The Portuguese first brought the Kotte Kingdom under their control. Thereafter, they entered into treaties and fought battles with the Jaffna Kingdom. They finally conquered the Jaffna Kingdom in a battle (1619) and hanged the Tamil king Sankili Kumaran (Balasingham 2004). They governed the Sinhalese and Tamil areas separately, however, recognising their different ethnic identities. The Dutch, who came after the Portuguese, also followed suit and ruled both areas separately (Gunasingam 2008).

In 1796, the British took over the reign from the Dutch and initially ruled these two distinct ethnic communities separately. In 1815, the British succeeded in what the Portuguese and Dutch could not do previously, conquering the Kandyan Kingdom for the very first time. For their own administrative convenience, the British in 1833 imposed a unified state structure incorporating all three Kingdoms into a single administrative body, irrespective of ethnic differences (Balasingham 2004; Gunasingam 2008). When compared to the Portuguese and Dutch colonial rule, the British colonial rule made an important impact on the social, economic, and political life of the island. The most significant event of the British rule was the imposition of an exploitative plantation economy in the central highlands of the island. In the early 1820s they set up coffee plantations, since this crop flourishes at high altitudes (Gunasingam 2008). Speculators and entrepreneurs from England rushed to the newly-conquered mountain areas and expropriated vast tracts of highlands from the Kandyan peasantry.

The Kandyan peasants refused to abandon their traditional subsistence holdings to become wage earners on these plantations. As a consequence, the British brought a massive supply of cheap labourers (Tamils) from South India into “this Promised Land to be condemned to an appalling form of slave labour” (Balasingham 2004:4). Nearly a million were imported during the 1840s and 1850s. Owing to a leaf disease that ravaged the plantations, the coffee plantation economy collapsed in the 1870s. In the 1880s, they introduced a successor crop, tea on a wide scale. This plantation sector effectively changed the economic foundation of the old feudal society, hastening the development of the capitalist economic system. This plantation economy not only benefitted the British but also enriched the Sinhalese land-owning classes (Gunasingam 2008). At the same time, it built up the Tamil plantation community within the heartland of the Kandyan Sinhalese, fuelling Tamil-Sinhalese antagonism.

The British colonial rule had enormous effects on the life of the Sri Lankan Tamils. At the political level, the British rule imposed “a unified administration with centralised institutions, establishing a singular state structure” (Balasingham 2004:5). In annexing the two nations, Tamils and Sinhalese, it disregarded their past historical existence, their socio-cultural, and their ethnic differences. This laid the foundation for the contemporary ethnic conflict in the island. Sensing the biggest potential threat to British rule coming from the majority Sinhalese

Buddhists, the British employed a calculated policy of divide-and-rule. Accordingly, the minority Sri Lankan Tamils were over-represented in the bureaucracy, civil service, and primary and secondary educational institutions (Tambiah 1991).

In the case of the Tamils, the arid, inhospitable northern agricultural terrain, coupled with a highly caste-based society, spurred many to seek governmental and other careers throughout the island (Tambiah 1991). Owing to American missionary work and its educational efforts in the north, many Tamils became highly competent in English. This contributed to their overrepresentation in the colonial administration and educational structures. British discriminatory policies towards the majority community enormously helped Tamils' upward mobility.

Tamil dominance in the colonial administration as well as in the plantation economic sector, privileges accorded to the English-educated elites, and the proselytising campaigns of Christian missionaries are factors that paved the way for the emergence of Sinhalese nationalism. Sensing the direction of the Sinhalese political wind, the Tamils requested Lord Soulbury, the last governor of the British Raj in the island, to enshrine minority guarantees in the constitution. Anticipating the majority tyranny, the Tamil leader G.G. Ponnambalam strongly called for a fifty-fifty formula (Wilson 2000). Viewing it as communalistic rhetoric, the British overlooked his demand. They failed to realise the necessity for some other arrangement beyond their preferred unitary structure and the first-past-the-post electoral system.

It is clear that the British should have instituted explicit minority guarantees or a disproportionate representative system that could preclude majority tyranny and promote minority input in Sri Lankan politics. Preoccupied with the plurality system, they refused to consider an alternative structure, electoral arrangement, or broad minority guarantees. They promoted an 'efficient' Westminster system that upheld the one person, one vote principle as opposed to a stable system encouraging polyethnic coexistence (Wilson 2000). The system the British imposed helped enable the ethnic group with the most votes and representatives to ride roughshod over the minorities. Realising his great mistake, Lord Soulbury later deplored publicly that "the British would have created more explicit minority guarantees had they better anticipated the potential for majority superordination" (DeVotta 2004:37). However, it was too late and already the damage had been done.

Owing to Sri Lanka's minuscule size, both territorially and demographically, and the nature of the relations with India, especially South India, the Sinhalese have over the years manifested the characters of a majority with a minority complex (Tambiah 1991). Manipulating historical myths and mythologies by equating Sinhalese and Buddhism provided ample fodder for opportunistic politicians and monks. They mixed folklore and religion to fashion a nationalistic ideology that powerfully imposed the belief that "Sri Lanka was the *Sihadipa* (the island of the Sinhalese) and *Dhammadipa* (the island enobled to preserve and propagate Buddhism)" (DeVotta 2004:27). They proclaimed that they were an "Aryan race". Fearing the Tamils in India's Tamil Nadu, they argue that they are waging a struggle for national existence against the Dravidian majority (the Tamils). They go on to argue that "if the Tamils get hold of the country, the Sinhalese will have to jump into the sea" (DeVotta 2004:130).

The past history shows that South Indian immigrants became Sinhalese. Before the onset of colonialism, the Sinhalese were not a unitary group or collectivity (Wilson 2000). They were drawn from diverse localities of origin in South India (the Malabar coast, the Coromandel coast, the southern tip of Ramnad, and elsewhere), and settled in the South and southwestern coast of the island over long periods of time in discontinuous waves of migration (Gunasingam 2008). Throughout their history, the Sinhalese people have been "enlarged and enriched by a number of discontinuous infusions of South Indian migrants" (Tambiah 1991:94). Besides, "there were other more cordial and more symbiotic interactions with and incorporations of South Indian people" at the level of military settlements, religious worship, guilds of craftsmen, and dynastic and royalty marriages (Tambiah 1991:94). Before the advent of colonialism, the Sinhalese were not a unitary group on the island.

Like the Sinhalese, the Tamils were also not a unitary group or collectivity on the island before the advent of colonialism. They were drawn largely from diverse localities of origin in South India and settled, in discontinuous waves of migration, in the north of the island and on its long eastern coast over hundreds of years. Tambiah argues that "this was attested to by internal differences in custom, kinship structure, inheritance practices, ritual cults, and so on" (1991:8). During the colonial period, the Tamils of the north and east did not have strong social interconnections. Moreover, the Tamils were internally divided by different caste categories (Herath 2004).

It is clear that in the early historical periods, both the Sinhalese and Tamils were internally divided by different geographical segments, caste categories, and communal aggregates. However, Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, that had breathed fire during the colonial and subsequent periods, mobilised the Sinhalese under a single chauvinistic ideology. In response, reactive nationalism mobilised the Tamils (Wilson 2000). In contemporary Sri Lanka, both communities are highly polarised and politicised as ever before. Ignorant of their past, both the Sinhalese and Tamils have come to think and feel “as two separate people, two ethnic species, locked in a man-made battle for survival” (Tambiah 1991:102).

Soon after the transfer of political power to the majority in 1948, Sinhala nationalism reigned supreme and fuelled “a vicious and violent form of state oppression against the Tamils” (Balasingham 2004:6). The Sinhalese nationalists have always exaggerated the level of Tamil participation in the employment and educational sector, and their privileged position. It is undeniable that Tamil participation in higher education and the number of white-collar professional positions had always been proportionately higher than their demographic size (Winslow & Woost 2004). This reflects the traditional Tamil concentration on these professional skills, which they have dominated under conditions of equal competition. Going beyond objective facts, the nationalists give conspiratorial reasons for the talents the Tamils have carefully nursed. At the same time, the Sinhalese disregard all the economic and commercial advantages, including those associated with the plantation industry, that have accrued to them (Sivanayagam 2005).

Soon after independence, the Sri Lankan parliament became the very instrument of majoritarian tyranny enacting repressive laws against Tamils. The first victims were the Indian Tamils who had toiled for the prosperity of the island for more than a century. The infamous Citizenship Act of 1948 disenfranchised nearly a million plantation workers, robbing them of their basic human rights and reducing them to an appalling condition of statelessness (Balasingham 2004). Aiming to change the demographic pattern of the Tamil homeland and to reduce the Tamils to a minority on their historical lands, the aggressive state-aided colonisation campaign was undertaken in the Tamil areas. The Sinhalese state oppression soon penetrated into the sphere of language, education, and employment. The ‘Sinhala Only’ movement spearheaded by the Sinhalese populist politician, S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake catapulted him to the height of his political power in 1956 (Winslow &

Woost 2004). His first act in parliament as Prime Minister was to put an end to the official and equal status enjoyed by the Tamil language by declaring Sinhala as the only official language of the country (Wickramasinghe 2006). Demanding proficiency in Sinhala, the Sinhala Only Act practically closed employment opportunities to the Tamils in the public service.

As a way of leveling the playing field, in 1970 a discriminative selective policy called 'standardisation' was introduced demanding higher marks from the Tamil students for university admissions whereas the Sinhalese students were admitted with lower grades (Sivanayagam 2005). Thus, a vast population of Tamil youth was deprived of accessing higher education and employment; this paved the way for the latter day Tamil militancy. State oppression also led to the economic strangulation of the Tamil areas. Apart from a few state-owned factories built immediately after independence, the Tamil areas were largely left out of all national development projects (Gunasingam 2008). With the motive of destroying Tamil dominance in the economy, anti-Tamil riots were periodically staged in 1956, 1958, 1974, 1977, 1979, 1981, and in July 1983. All major riots were masterminded by successive Sinhalese governments. The 1983 riot was a watershed in Sinhalese-Tamil relations. Stripping them of their status as 'captains of the industry', it more or less wiped out the Tamil entrepreneurial classes (DeVotta 2004:151). "Two weeks ago Tamils owned 60 percent of the wholesale trade and 80 percent of the retail trade in the capital. Today that trade is gone", the Economist observed (DeVotta 2004:151).

Owing to these 'affirmative' actions on their own behalf, the Sinhalese have, by now, decidedly corrected the imbalance and tipped the scale in their favour augmenting their participation in education and employment far greater than their population size (Tambiah 1991). The cumulative effect of the multi-dimensional state oppression had far-reaching consequences. In the early stages, Tamil national sentiments found organisational expression in the form of the Federal Party (FP) led by S.J.V. Chelvanayagam (Wilson 2000). Following the implementation of the Sinhala Only Act, the FP launched passive, peaceful, sit-in protests as a form of popular resistance demanding a federal form of autonomy for the Tamils. In a desperate attempt to arrest the growing conflict, the Prime Minister SWRD Bandaranayake, who was the leader of the Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP), signed a pact in 1956 with the FP leader Chelvanayagam agreeing to give some concession to the Tamils. This pact

provided “some elements of political autonomy under regional councils with a promise to stop Sinhalese colonisation of Tamil areas” (Balasingham 2004:11).

The pact sparked resentment among the Sinhalese racist elements. JR Jeyawardane, the populist politician of the United National Party or UNP (the main opposition party of the Sinhalese) exploited this explosive situation: he organised a massive protest march, with the support of Buddhist monks, demanding the abrogation of the pact. Carrying a copy of the pact in a coffin, the monks marched to the Prime Minister’s residence. Their communal drama finally ended with the ceremonial burning of the coffin in front of his residence. Succumbing to the pressure, Bandaranayake made a solemn pledge to abrogate it, by tearing up a copy of the pact (Gunasingam 2008). This about-turn destroyed all hopes of racial harmony on the island.

In 1965, Dudley Senanayake and SJV Chelvanayakam, the UNP and FP leaders respectively, had agreed on what came to be known as the Senanayake–Chelvanayakam (S–C) Pact (Winslow & Woost 2004). Even though the pact was proposing a flimsy devolutionary scheme, the Sri Lankan Freedom Party or SLFP (the then main opposition party of the Sinhalese) and other chauvinistic elements fiercely opposed the pact citing it as a bloody-cut throat agreement. Yielding to collective pressure, Dudley Senanayake abandoned his decentralisation plan (Balasingham 2004). Like Bandaranayake before him, Dudley Senanayake once more abandoned the opportunity to placate the Tamils, for the politics of ethnic outbidding. The grand irony of this tragic political drama was that the UNP, which had virulently opposed SWRD Bandaranayake’s plan for devolution, had tried to implement something remotely akin to the B-C pact, only to be opposed by the SLFP and Bandaranayake’s widow (Wilson 2000).

The continuing state oppression radicalised the Tamil youths and encouraged secession. In May 1972, all moderate Tamil parties joined forces and formed the Tamil United Front (TUF). In May 1976, the TUF convened a national convention at Vaddukoddai in Jaffna (Gunasingam 2008). The convention adopted a resolution calling for the political independence of the Tamil nation, Tamil Eelam, constituting the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. It was also decided at the convention that the TUF change its name to the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). In the General Election of July 1977, the TULF asked for a clear mandate from the Tamils to wage a national struggle for the political

independence of Tamil Eelam (Wilson 2000). The Tamils voted overwhelmingly in favour of the mandate. The TULF called for Tamil Eelam just as a gimmick to marginalise the burgeoning Tamil militants on the one hand, and to force the government to compromise and grant the Tamils increased autonomy.

The Sinhalese had no reason to believe that the Tamils would resort to armed struggle because two decades of passive Sathyagraha campaigns and fasts had suggested that “Sinhalese preferences could be instituted without any adverse Tamil backlash” (DeVotta 2004:166). For the Tamils, the idea that their youth could resort to violence was inconceivable. No one anticipated that “the Tamils who were stereotyped as career-oriented, intellectual, and passive”, would launch an armed struggle (DeVotta 2004:166). In 1970 Tamil youths had first formed the Tamil Students’ Federation which was rechristened the Tamil New Tigers (TNT) soon thereafter (Wilson 2000). Then it was renamed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) under the leadership of Vellupillai Prabhakaran in 1976 (Wilson 2000). The LTTE emerged eventually as the sole organisation fighting for a separate Tamil state in the north and east of Sri Lanka (see figure 4).

Following the emergence of the LTTE, the government had adopted a two-fold approach to end the separatist war. On the one hand, it had enticed the LTTE to the peace talks, and on the other it launched military operations to defeat the LTTE on the battlefield. In July and August 1985, the government and the LTTE engaged in a peace talk with the Indian mediation at Thimphu, Bhutan (Winslow & Woost 2004). At the talks, Tamil delegates asked the government to agree on four cardinal principles later called ‘Thimphu principles’, as a foundation for any meaningful solution to the ethnic conflict. These principles were: 1) recognition of the Tamils as a distinct nationality; 2) recognition of the traditional homeland of the Tamils; 3) recognition of the inalienable right of self-determination; and 4) recognition of the right to full citizenship and other fundamental democratic rights of all Tamils (Winslow & Woost 2004). Since the government delegation rejected the principles outright, the Thimphu talks ended in a fiasco.

On 26 May 1997, the government started its major military campaign codenamed ‘Operation Liberation’ against the LTTE. At this juncture, the India government sent its aircraft to the island and “dropped tones of relief supplies to the affected areas from the air, in complete violation of Sri Lankan air space” (Herath 2002:61). Thereafter, on 29 July 1987, the

governments of India and Sri Lanka signed an agreement, the Indo-Lanka Accord to establish peace and normalcy in Sri Lanka (Wickramasinghe 2006). Following the agreement, the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was deployed in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the island to implement the Accord. In accordance with the Accord, the LTTE refused to surrender its weapons to the IPKF. Consequently, war broke out between the IPKF and the LTTE. On 20 September 1988, Ranasinghe Premadasa, opposed to the agreement, was elected as the Executive President of Sri Lanka (Wickramasinghe 2006). As the fighting between the IPKF and the LTTE had transformed into a war of attrition, he feared that Indian troops might stay on Sri Lankan soil indefinitely. While the war was raging in the North and East, President Premadasa initiated talks with the LTTE. The talks began with the convergence of the interests of both parties to get the IPKF out of the country. To achieve his objective, President Premadasa engaged in a secret supply of money and weapons to the LTTE to fight the IPKF (Herath 2002). At the same time, he demanded the Indian government to withdraw its troops from Sri Lanka.

After the IPKF left the country, the LTTE made unrealistic demands. When the government failed to meet their demands, in June 1990, the LTTE abandoned the peace negotiations and resumed the war. Two years later, on 01 May 1993, a suicide bomber, alleged to be a LTTE cadre, blew up President Premadasa (Dissanayaka 2004). Thereafter, Chandrika Bandaranaike won the parliamentary election held on 16 August 1994 on the platform of peace (Balasingham 2004). Soon after becoming Prime Minister, she initiated peace talks with the LTTE. However, the talks ended in failure. Having blamed Chandrika's government of acting in bad faith, the LTTE resumed the war (Herath 2002). President Chandrika then renewed her military campaign against the LTTE under a new banner of 'war for peace' (Herath 2002). However, her war for peace strategy did not bring peace. It brought more death and destruction in the country. The LTTE made significant gains in the battlefield. The Sri Lankan military suffered humiliating defeats at the hands of the LTTE. There was a widespread war-wariness among the Sinhalese population. The country suffered the first economic contraction since gaining its independence in 1948. The balance of power shifted in favour of the LTTE. This set the stage for the Norwegian facilitated peace talks.

An Audit of the Sri Lankan Peace Process

3.1. The Norwegian Facilitated Peace Talks

Norwegian efforts to bring about peace between successive Sri Lankan governments and the LTTE spanned a twelve-year period beginning from 1997 until the end of the war in May 2009 (Sorbo *et al.* 2011). Initially, Norway was in contact with both parties exploring possibilities for talks. In the parliamentary election of 05 December 2001, Mr Ranil Wickremasinghe's United National Front (UNF) swept to power with a popular mandate for peace and negotiated settlement. The LTTE made the first move for peace and declared a month long unilateral ceasefire beginning on midnight 24 December 2001 as an expression of goodwill to the government (Sorbo *et al.* 2011).

The LTTE was at the height of its military power when it declared the ceasefire. It had attained a series of military victories in the battles of Vanni. On 24 July 2001, it launched a formidable commando attack on the Sri Lankan Air Force base at Katunayake, the island's largest airbase complex and the adjoining Bandaranaike International Airport, the only airport linked to the outside world (Winslow & Woost 2004). The scale and extent of the destruction had a crippling effect on the island's economy. Registering a negative real growth of 1.4%, the island suffered the first economic contraction since gaining independence in 1948 (Balasingham 2004). Besides the Jaffna peninsula and Mannar Island, the LTTE had established its *de facto* administration over the entire Northern Province and large stretches of territory in the Eastern Province (Balasingham 2004). These achievements tipped the balance of forces in its favour. Kenneth Waltz's point regarding the balance of power is relevant here. As he argues, the balance of power pushes actors towards negotiation (Lamy 2006).

The new government of Ranil Wickremasinghe reciprocated favorably to the LTTE's gesture of peace. With the request of both parties, the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, the Royal Norwegian Government (RNG) began its facilitator role in Sri Lanka. Following the suspension of war, in February 2002 the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) was signed by both parties (Herath 2002). This was seen as an historic achievement. With the facilitation of the RNG, both sides held six rounds of talks in various capitals of the world, but could not reach an agreement. The peace process soon plunged into a protracted no-war, no-peace stalemate (Philipson 2011). The last window of opportunity for peace emerged in the form of the

Tsunami, which hit the island hard in December 2004. However, the conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE over governance and aid provision to the Tsunami affected people fuelled tensions that plunged the island first into shadow war, then into open warfare (Goodhand & Korf 2011).

Unlike its involvement in other peace initiatives, Norway was the “sole facilitator in the Sri Lanka peace process” (Sorbo *et al.* 2011:3). Besides being a significant bilateral donor, Norway was the head of the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM), which was constituted of monitors from the Scandinavian countries to monitor the Ceasefire Agreement. Peacemaking is a cornerstone of Norwegian foreign policy. Despite having no obvious national interests, Norway became involved in the Sri Lankan conflict for a variety of reasons. First, Norway has a comparative advantage in peacemaking. It is a rich, resourceful country with no colonial history. It also has immense expertise in the field of mediation. Second, its international peacemaking role promotes a national image as a great moral power. Third, mediation boosts its international image. Fourth, the presence of the large Tamil Diaspora also influenced its decision. Fifth, Norway was available and acceptable to the parties to the conflict. Norway and its NGOs had established ties with Sri Lanka through a series of developmental projects. Moreover, Norway had helped Anton Balasingham, who was in need of medical treatment, to have his kidney transplanted in Norway. This medical help “opened up a direct channel from Norway to the inner circle of the LTTE” which was a strictly hierarchical organization (Hoglund & Svenson 2009:180). Norway was one of the few actors who had contacts with the Tiger leadership.

On the one hand, “as a non-state actor with an aspiration of representing a nation, and a nation-state in the making”, the LTTE sought “recognition and international legitimacy” (Hoglund & Svenson 2009:180). In this respect, the LTTE preferred the Western countries rather than Asian countries which were friendly to Sri Lanka. Less official actors in the conflict resolution field such as various NGOs were probably not acceptable to them. On the other hand, in keeping with Kenneth Waltz’s discussion on states’ concern for security (Lamy 2006), the Sri Lankan state was concerned about protecting its sovereignty and extremely wary of measures that granted recognition to the LTTE. It seemed to be reluctant to accept high-stake involvement by the US and UN in the ethnic conflict (Lewis 2010).

Besides, India is a regional power and has a link with the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. It had already intervened in the conflict and brought about the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987. Moreover, the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) which had been dispatched to the North and East of Sri Lanka to implement the Accord eventually ended up fighting against the LTTE. In 1991, the LTTE assassinated the former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi which led to their banning in India (Keethaponcalan 2011). Having burnt its fingers once, India was reluctant to get involved in the conflict again. As neo-realists explain, states are self-interest oriented and rational actors, selecting strategies to maximize benefits and minimize losses (Lamy 2006). Similarly, holding a *de facto* veto on the involvement of external third parties into its sphere of influence, India fiercely favoured a small country like Norway rather than a powerful big country becoming involved in the conflict. The US also endorsed the Norwegian involvement in the conflict. More importantly, Norway demonstrated its propensity to act as an intermediary in internal armed conflicts throughout the world (Philipson 2011). That is how Norway turned out to be an acceptable candidate to all concerned parties in the conflict.

At the same time, numerous factors propelled both the government and the LTTE into the peace process. For the LTTE, the peace process offered an opportunity to regroup and refinance the organization. Although the balance of power had shifted in its favour, the LTTE experienced problems of manpower shortages and lack of resources due to intensive and incessant military activities. Secondly, the LTTE realized that there was a lack of support for military activities throughout the island. At that juncture, some leading lights of the Tamil diaspora also preferred a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Finally, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the US took stern measures against those non-state actors who used violence to achieve their objectives. The LTTE was a proscribed organization in a number of countries including the US. The LTTE was eager to use the peace process to recast itself as a liberation organization engaged in a legitimate freedom struggle (Winslow & Woost 2004).

For the government of Ranil Wickramasinghe, the peace process offered an opportunity to rebuild its shattered economy and crippled military machine. In addition, there was a widespread war-wariness among the Sinhalese population. All these combined factors led to the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA), initial peace talks and a period of no war-no peace, which was followed by an escalating shadow war and finally open hostilities culminating in the destruction of the LTTE in May 2009 (Goodhand & Walton 2009). With the end of the war,

the Norwegian facilitated peace process came to an end. The salient point is that the very same peace process that the LTTE initiated had eventually consumed them leading to their destruction.

Even though internal and external factors contributed to the collapse of the peace process, many unwittingly criticize the Norwegian approach for its failure. The Norwegian facilitation model was composed of three ideas, namely ownership, impartiality, and internationalization. First, it emphasized the parties' ownership of the peace process, where "the responsibility, both for the process design and for its continuation, rests with the parties themselves" (Hoglund & Svenson 2009:183). Accordingly, both parties, the GoSL and the LTTE owned the process and Norway merely played a consultative role in arranging dialogue.

Many analysts criticize the two-party model of ownership for leaving out large segments of Sri Lankan society such as the Muslim minority, non-LTTE Tamil groups, and representatives of civil society (Goodhand & Korf 2009). This criticism is a preposterous one. First of all, two major protagonists to the armed conflict brought Norway not as a mediator but as a facilitator to assist in communication between parties. Both parties held veto power over the process and did not give much room to Norway for maneuverability. That is why they brought Norway into the process instead of a big power which could impose a roadmap to peace on them. By that time, when the process began, both parties virtually held a monopoly over violence from either side. It was evident when both parties decided to stop violence, it completely ceased.

Moreover, the Sri Lankan government largely represented the Sinhalese community during the peace talks (Balasingham 2004). Enjoying the overwhelming support of Tamils at home and abroad, the LTTE represented the Tamils in the peace process. It was widely viewed that whatever solution the LTTE accepted would be accepted by the Tamils. Although the LTTE was not interested in parliamentary politics, it created the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) as a political party to demonstrate its popular support to the outside world. The Tamils overwhelmingly voted for the TNA in every election that took place before the end of the war in May 2009. The TNA also accepted the LTTE as the sole representative of the Tamils at the peace talks (DeVotta 2004). Although the Muslims were not involved directly in the armed conflict, Rauff Hakeem, the Cabinet Minister and the leader of the largest Muslim party, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) was allowed to represent the Muslims in the peace

talks. The Minister was part of the government delegation to the peace talks representing the Muslim community (Uyangoda 2011). However, both parties were opposed to the idea of bringing a separate Muslim delegation at the early stage of the peace talks. But, they agreed in principle to allow a separate Muslim delegation to the talks at a later stage when issues related to the Muslims were discussed (Balasingham 2004).

Furthermore, both parties were not weak actors (Uyangoda 2011). On the one hand, Sri Lanka is a middle income country. The Sri Lankan state is “well developed and staffed by a competent bureaucracy” and ‘very different from the type of state often encountered in post-war peace-building exercise” (Lewis 2010:653). Despite being authoritarian, the LTTE, on the other hand, was the more powerful organization at the beginning of the peace talks. Being powerful actors, both parties seemed to have given not much leverage to Norway over them. At the same time, ‘Norway had no power outside the process’ (Hoglund & Svenson 2009:184). Norway operated on the basis of invitation, mandate and the continued consent of both parties. It largely depended on dialogue, persuasion, and information to influence the process (Goodhand & Korf 2011).

In the two-party model, the parties were in charge of taking initiatives towards accommodation leading to more flexibility and efficiency in the peace talks. The parties reached the Ceasefire Agreement within a short span of time. By agreeing in principle to explore federalism as a solution, the parties also demonstrated their willingness in the Oslo Declaration to tackle the core issues of the ethnic conflict. However, both parties had not taken any tangible measures to reach resolution. Despite the Oslo Declaration, it seems that the government strived to maintain the unitary nature of the state with minimum devolution of power. In contrast, while virtually running a *de facto* state in their controlled territories, the LTTE tried to go beyond any federal arrangements (Uyangoda 2011). It was evident in their proposal for an interim administration for the North and East, the Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA), was structurally more confederal in nature. The unbridgeable gap between their stances also contributed to the collapse of the peace process.

Second, the Norwegian facilitation model emphasized impartiality (Lewis 2010). Norway actually tried to act in a manner of evenhandedness and treated both parties, the GoSL, the state actor and the LTTE, the non-state actor as equal partners to the peace process (Uyangoda 2011). However, a large section of the majority Sinhalese community viewed

Norway as favouring the Tamil cause. A number of factors might have induced this viewpoint. During the peace talks, Norway was one of the few countries which had knowledge about and close contact with the LTTE leadership. It seems that the special link, established between the Norwegian envoy Eric Solheim and the chief negotiator of the LTTE Anton Balasingham, had over the years evolved into a personal friendship. Second, the GoSL discouraged foreign diplomats and dignitaries from meeting the LTTE leadership fearing that these meetings could confer recognition to the LTTE. As a result, Norwegian peace envoys were among the few meeting the LTTE leaders. The Sinhala nationalistic media gave negative publicity to these meetings. Third, Norway had not criticized the LTTE publicly for its ceasefire and human rights violations (Uyangoda 2011). These factors may have influenced the perception of bias among the Sinhalese.

In addition, the LTTE which violated the Ceasefire Agreement numerically more than the Sri Lankan armed forces. In violation of the Agreement, the LTTE assassinated the members of the pro-government paramilitary groups, and engaged in arms smuggling, child soldier recruitment, and human rights violations (Lewis 2010). Despite the asymmetrical level of violence, the government armed forces also engaged in many serious violations that threatened the survival of the Agreement. Moreover, the Sri Lankan military failed to implement many provisions of the Agreement. The military assassinated the LTTE leaders using paramilitary groups and the Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRPs) and engaged in human rights violations (Smith 2011). The military also failed to withdraw from public places and remove impediments to economic activities, such as fishing and farming in the war-affected areas (Spencer 2011). These failures had hampered resettlement and rehabilitation of internally-displaced persons affecting the return of normalcy. As a facilitator, Norway avoided criticizing the parties in public but raised these matters with them behind closed doors.

Besides, Norway wanted to have a monitoring mechanism independent from it (Philipson 2011). The GoSL and India fiercely opposed the idea of incorporating great powers into the monitoring body. As a result, Norway was compelled to compose the monitoring mission exclusively of observers from Nordic countries and headed the mission. This created an awkward situation where Norway was acting as a facilitator as well as monitor of the Ceasefire Agreement (Keethaponcalan 2011). This dual role also contributed to the perception of bias, since many failed to distinguish the SLMM from the facilitation effort.

The third characteristic of the Norwegian approach was the internationalization of the peace process (Lewis 2010). Norway had an aspiration to be a significant voice in the international system. As a small country, it depended on leverage from big powers and international financial institutions. As a result, it encouraged the wider engagement of the international community in the Sri Lankan peace process. For the UNF government led by Ranil Wickramasinghe, international security guarantees, particularly from the US and India, would provide a safety net and reduce the government's exposure in the event of a return to war with the LTTE. To build the international safety net, Ranil's administration also internationalized the peace process (Lunstead 2011).

Ranil's United National Party (UNP), which was the main constituent party of the UNF, was the right of centre and had an ideological affinity with the Republican administration of George W. Bush. Having elected to power with the strong backing of the business sector, Ranil's administration viewed the peace process as a means to an end, "the ultimate goal being liberalization and structural reforms leading to rapid economic development", as stated in the government's poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), entitled *Regaining Sri Lanka* (Goodhand & Walton 2009: 308). His administration aimed to transform the island as "an entrepot metropolis for the fast growing south India region" (Goodhand & Walton 2009: 308). The so called economization of peace process attracted many international actors and financial institutions towards Sri Lanka. Moreover, "international donors provided the financial backing for the infrastructure of peace talks and the promise of significant funding in order to generate a peace dividend" (Sriskandarajah quoted in Goodhand & Walton 2009: 308).

As part of its strategy for promoting peace, the US began to strengthen its military relationship with Sri Lanka. Once the peace process began, the US military relationship increased substantially with Sri Lanka. The US emphasized that its military assistance aimed at deterring the LTTE from returning to war and ensuring that the Sri Lankan military would be more capable if the LTTE did resume hostilities (Lunstead 2011). There is no free lunch in international diplomacy and power politics. As the proponents of neo-realism argue, states pursue their own self interests (Lamy 2006). Therefore, the US was not making peace for peace's sake. With the aim of enhancing the capacity of the US Navy and Air Force to project power in South Asia, Central Asia and the Arabian Sea, Bush's administration tried to enter a

military pact, the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) with Ranil's government (Sivaram 2006). Signing a mutually beneficial agreement with the world's sole super power could have provided adequate military and other assistance to Sri Lanka for crushing the LTTE in the event of war breaking out again. Owing to fierce opposition from India, the proposed pact was put on the shelf (Sivaram 2006).

Although the LTTE had never targeted US nationals or other US interests, the US designated the LTTE as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO). The US provided Sri Lanka with extensive military assistance including the ex-US Coast Guard cutter *Courageous* (Lunstead 2011). While maintaining this hard line, "it tried to communicate to the LTTE that a change in LTTE behavior could lead to a change in the US approach" (Lunstead 2011: 69). As the message was too vague, it appears that "the LTTE leadership did not see specific benefits which would result from actions on their part" (Lunstead 2011: 75). This unbalanced pro-state approach of the US shifted the balance of power against the LTTE. It seems that the LTTE felt hemmed in and in danger of losing its negotiating leverage. By pursuing a policy of containment of the LTTE, the international community sent the wrong signal to Ranil's administration. The US approach only hardened the stance of the Sri Lankan government in the peace talks. The increased military assistance was largely viewed by the government as a green light to pursue a military path to the conflict.

Excessive internationalization had made the LTTE leadership view the peace process as a peace trap, set against them. When the LTTE was left out of the critical aid conference in Washington in May 2003, the LTTE used this exclusion as an opportunity to extricate itself from the 'peace trap' and suspended the peace negotiations. The LTTE avoided participating in the subsequent donor conference in Tokyo, which was organized by Japan to support the peace process and reconstruct and develop Sri Lanka (Burke & Mulakala 2011). The US approach also increased the tension between the UNF parliamentary government led by Ranil Wickremasinghe and President Chandrika Kumaratunga of the People's Alliance (PA). Owing to ideological affinity, President Bush invited Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe to the Oval Office and met twice within sixteen months, leaving out President Chandrika (Lunstead 2011). Although President Chandrika was, under the Constitution, Head of State and Head of Government, as well as Commander in Chief, the Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe sidelined her on every occasion he had using this close relationship with President Bush (Lunstead 2011).

Propelled by this acrimony, the President dissolved Ranil's government in February and enthroned her PA government. In the ongoing ethnic outbidding, she could not bear to see her bitter rival Ranil Wickremasinghe succeeding where she had failed (Balasingham 2004). Ranil was not allowed to complete his full five-year term to show the economic dividend of his reform. Forcing through two major structural changes (negotiating a peace settlement and implementing radical reforms), the UNF created unmanageable tensions within the polity and finally lost the April 2004 parliamentary election to Chandrika's PA (Lunstead 2011). Although Chandrika stated her desire for peace, her People's Alliance government was largely viewed as an anti-peace alliance (Goodhand & Korf 2011). With the loss of Ranil's UNF government, the international community lost interest in the peace process. More importantly, the US quickly pulled back from the process.

Although India expressed its support for the Sri Lankan peace process, it seems that it was worried about the excessive internationalization of the peace process and expanding influence of extra-regional powers into what it considered its backyard. It also viewed that the peace process was legitimizing the LTTE and would confer upon the rebels the status of rightful political actors if it succeeded. It feared that 'a successful liberation movement for Tamils in Sri Lanka could inspire the radical nationalist groups in Tamil Nadu, leading to separation or at least instability in the region' (Keethaponcalan 2011:78). As neo-realism argues, states act in their own national interests (Beckman 1995). In line with neo-realism, India might have sabotage the peace process. Once the peace talks began, India tried by all available means to bring the LTTE leader Prabhakaran to face trial in India for assassinating Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India. It was alleged that India exerted pressure on Norway to put the LTTE in its place. Working behind the scenes to undermine the peace process, it is believed that "India collaborated very closely with the ultra-nationalist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), that was in the forefront of the movement against the peace process" (Keethaponcalan 2011:78). Moreover, it was widely believed that President Chandrika dissolved Ranil's UNF government with the blessing of India.

Besides the internationalization of the peace process, the breakaway of the LTTE's Eastern commander in March 2004 significantly strengthened the hands of the Sri Lankan government. Furthermore, the May 2004 parliamentary election in India brought the Indian National Congress, commonly known as the Congress Party, to power in a most dramatic

manner which made Sonia Gandhi, who had been widowed by the LTTE, the most powerful person in India (Keethaponcalan 2011). India, under her leadership, took a more hardline approach towards the LTTE pushing the parties on the path of war. In the Sri Lankan presidential election of November 2005, Mahinda Rajapaksa who was a Sinhala nationalist and against the Norwegian peace efforts, was catapulted to power (Uyangoda 2011). Above all, there was an enormous shift of power from the West to East taking place.

This shift in the global distribution of power was also reflected in the peace process. As a result, Asian countries such as China, India, Japan, and South Korea exerted more influence in Sri Lanka. Their financial and military aid permitted “sustained increases in defense spending and made up for cut-backs in aid from several multi-lateral and western bilateral donors” (Goodhand & Walton 2009: 318). As a result, the West lost its leverage over the peace process. The enormous assistance of Asian powers enabled Rajapaksa to pursue an uncompromising stance towards the peace process and the LTTE. There was a high-level of popular support among the Sinhalese for his uncompromising stance. Similarly, the larger segment of Diaspora Tamils encouraged the LTTE to pursue the war path to attain its goal (Philipson 2011).

All these collective factors eventually sabotaged the peace process. Norway cannot be held solely responsible for the collapse of the peace process. It is true that the Norwegian-facilitated peace process contributed to several intermediate achievements, including the Ceasefire Agreement, the Oslo declaration, and the signing of the Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS). However, it failed miserably to resolve the ethnic conflict peacefully. On the one hand, the peace process eventually paved the way for the destruction of the LTTE leaving the Tamils without a strong leadership. On the other hand, it created a congenial condition in which the Sinhalese nationalists were put on a pedestal. This narrowed the chances for positive peace in Sri Lanka.

The enthusiasm and euphoria that radiated at the initial phase of the peace process soon died down. The excessive internationalization of the peace process, unbalanced, pro-state approach of the US, subversive activities of India, and split within the LTTE eventually disrupted the balance of power that had brought both parties to the negotiating table. The shift in global distribution of power also upset the balance of power between the parties and

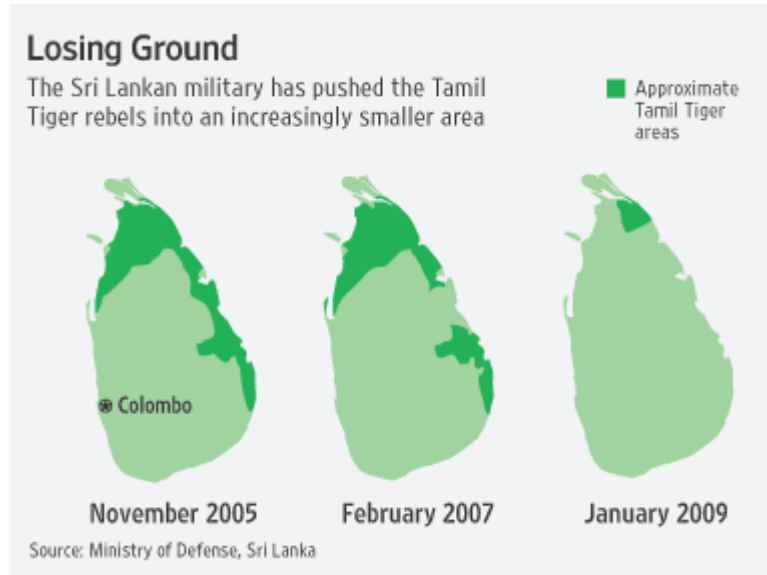
created a congenial condition for war. Sri Lanka slowly slipped from a situation of no war-no peace into an escalating shadow war and finally full-scale war.

Eelam War-IV

4.1. From Shadow War to Full-Scale War

The Norwegian facilitated peace process failed to resolve the ethnic conflict peacefully since the LTTE, the Sri Lankan government and the international community had taken part in the process with their own separate agendas. The LTTE, on the one hand, having achieved a series of military victories against the Sri Lankan

Figure 5: Shrinking LTTE Territories



forces, entered into the peace process with a fearsome reputation to legitimize its war gains (Philipson 2011). The Sri Lankan government, on the other hand, stepped into the process to achieve what it could not achieve through the war, the goal of containing the LTTE. At the same time, the US- led international community viewed the peace process as an opportunity to set its foot firmly in the island and to liberalise the island's economy (Lewis 2010).

Assuming that economic development would create disincentives for going back to war, the western donors provided extensive aid to Sri Lanka thereby placing “the development cart before the conflict resolution horse” (Goodhand & Korf 2011:12). In the absence of an agreed-upon institutional framework for dividing the spoils of peace, the dividend of peace accrued to the South leaving out the war-ravaged areas controlled by the LTTE. The economic and military assistances largely altered the balance of power in favour of the government severely undermining the bargaining power of the LTTE in the peace talks. As a result, even after the six rounds of talks, both parties could not settle the core issues of the ethnic conflict. The heavily internationalised peace process, overseen by a group of co-chairs such as the US, the EU, Norway and Japan, plunged into a protracted no-war, no-peace stalemate.

On 01 November 2003, the LTTE submitted their ISGA proposal for the interim administration of the north and east to Ranil's administration (Lunstead 2011). While Prime Minister Ranil was considering the proposal, President Chandrika struck at Ranil's government by taking away three important portfolios of defense, interior, and media. On 07 February 2004, President Chandrika dissolved Parliament and thereby brought an end to Ranil Wickremasinghe's government (Uyangoda 2011). In snap elections held in April 2004, Wickremasinghe's UNP lost power. Chandrika's UPFA managed to form a fragile coalition government with the support of ultranationalist parties such as JVP and Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU). Exposing deep divisions within the southern polity, Chandrika's administration took "a more critical stance towards the LTTE and the peace process and rejected the ISGA proposal" (Goodhand & Korf 2011:12). The chauvinist elements within the Sinhalese even opposed the joint Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS) for the distribution of aid resources to the affected people in the north and east, and finally blocked its implementation.

The LTTE was of the opinion that "they were being used by the GoSL to gain substantial international funds that were going to be controlled from Colombo, not from the Vanni" (Philipson 2011: 148). The LTTE also viewed the international community's actions as being increasingly biased towards the Sri Lankan state. Frustrated by the non-implementation of agreements, the delaying tactics of the government, and the partiality of international actors, it seems that the LTTE tried to extricate itself from the overly internationalized peace process. The defection of Karuna, the LTTE's Eastern military commander, who had helped the movement to consolidate its clout and control over the Eastern Province, in March 2004 was a big boost for the Sri Lankan military (Philipson 2011). It is believed that "it was the first substantial insider intelligence they had achieved and fuelled the military belief that victory was possible" (Philipson 2011: 149).

Thereafter, the protracted no-war, no-peace stalemate slowly slid into a shadow war. On the one hand, the Sri Lankan military with the help of paramilitary groups assassinated the LTTE leaders and their supporters and Tamil parliamentarians of the TNA. On the other hand, the LTTE assassinated military intelligence officers, members of paramilitary groups and government ministers including the foreign minister Laxman Kadirgamar. The presidential election of November 2005 was a contest between Mahinda Rajapaksa of the SLFP and Ranil Wickremasinghe of the UNP as Chandrika became ineligible for re-election (Philipson 2011).

Mahinda Rajapaksa defeated his rival with a slim margin and assumed office. Unlike the LTTE, Mahinda Rajapaksa seemed to have better understood the distribution of power in the international system. He not only took “advantage of the increased influence of China in the region” but also benefitted from “a shift in global norms in relation to sovereignty and internal conflict” (Lewis 2010:648). Moving away from the norms and practices of liberal peace-building where civil wars and internal conflicts were increasingly solved through peaceful means, he reasserted the norms of sovereignty and conflict management. At the same time, he made “full use of the Western rhetoric of the war on terror, using language as a powerful tool to undermine the position of the LTTE and justify the military campaign” (Lewis 2010:648).

President Rajapaksa formed the UPFA government incorporating warmongering parties such as the JVP, JHU, Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP), Desha Vimukthi Janatha Pakshaya, Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), and Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL). As opposed to the previous Ranil administration, President Rajapaksa chartered a very different political framework for ending the conflict. Rajapaksa undertook a political framework consisting of three key tenets. Those tenets were: first, there could be no political solution without a military victory over the LTTE; second, the LTTE was the main obstacle to peace, in which case, they were to be defeated rather than negotiated with; third, a political solution could be found within the framework of a demerged north and east, thus reversing a political consensus about the territorial unit for regional autonomy that went back to the Indo-Lanka accord of 1987 (Goodhand & Korf 2011).

Centralizing power in the hands of a small group comprised of his brothers and trusted advisors, building a broader political coalition in the South, and mobilizing the Sinhalese around a nationalistic discourse, President Rajapaksa pursued the path of war. In order to dilute the Western influence, he strengthened ties with regional powers, India and other non-traditional donors such as China, South Korea, Iran and Pakistan (Goodhand & Walton 2009). While pursuing a military path, he propagated ‘a vision of peace’ amenable to the international community. To deflect international criticism, he staged various political dramas. He conducted talks about talks with the LTTE in Geneva in February and October 2006 with the facilitation of Norway (Philipson 2011). To form a Southern consensus, he signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the opposition party leader Ranil Wickremasinghe. He thereafter constituted the All Party Representative Committee (APRC)

purportedly to find a political solution to the ethnic conflict. He also formed the International Independent Group of Eminent Persons (IIGEP) to observe the human rights investigations of the government (Lewis 2010). By staging these dramas, Mahinda Rajapaksa's administration bought time and space to pursue its military objectives while fending off international criticism.

With renewed hostilities, Sinhalese nationalism flared up in the South manifesting in attacks on media and media personnel and public demonstration against international actors, particularly Norway. By labeling peace supporters as traitors and associating peace with breaking up of the country, the Mahinda administration made the war seem acceptable in the South even at the cost of civil liberties and economic development. With the resumption of hostilities, the international community began to view the conflict largely through the lens of terrorism (Lunstead 2011). As a result, the EU and Canada proscribed the LTTE and stepped up their efforts to curb the LTTE's fund-raising and arms procurements. Having expressed their concerns about the government's military strategy, human rights abuses and massive displacement, the EU countries particularly Germany and the UK scaled down their development aid to Sri Lanka. The EU went further and threatened to withdraw trade concessions to Sri Lanka under the Generalised System of Preferences (GPS+) scheme (Goodhand & Walton 2009). Although the US watered down its developmental and military aid, it continued to assist Sri Lanka to fight the LTTE under the Anti-Terrorism Assistance programme. The US also made extensive efforts to crush the LTTE's arms procurement and fund raising networks by arresting several LTTE operatives and banning their front organizations (Lunstead 2011).

Owing to concerns over human rights abuses, Western financial assistance dropped significantly and conditional trade arrangements came under pressure. Financial and diplomatic support from China and other Asian countries was crucial for Sri Lanka to withstand international opposition to its military campaign. In keeping with John Mearsheimer's discussion on the different policy paths taken by small countries to achieve their security (2003:138), Rajapaksa's administration built up strong ties with anti-Western regimes in countries such as Iran and Myanmar and beefed up its relations with South-east and East Asian countries to make up for the cutbacks in aid from western donors and to ward off international criticism (Uyangoda 2011). More importantly, China played a pivotal role in changing the international climate in favour of Sri Lanka (de Alwis 2010). It is estimated that

more than fifty per cent of the external funding received between 2006-2009 had come from China (Lewis 2010).

While Western states refused to provide military equipment, support, and training, China offered its Jian-7 fighter jets, anti-aircraft guns, JY-11 3D air surveillance radars, armoured personnel carriers, main battle tanks and other sophisticated weaponry (de Alwis 2010). With Chinese encouragement, Pakistan, Beijing's ally extended its annual military assistance loans to Sri Lanka while 'supplying Chinese-origin small arms and training Sri Lankan air force personnel in precision guided attacks' (de Alwis 2010:435). Iran, another Chinese ally, supplied oil to Sri Lanka at a special concessionary rate and provided soft loans to fund the purchase of military equipment from China (de Alwis 2010).

To counter growing Chinese influence in Sri Lanka and perhaps in order to take revenge on the LTTE for killing its Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, India under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi ended its longstanding hands-off policy. She also became an active partner of President Rajapaksa's war against the LTTE with a continued verbal commitment to a peaceful solution to the ethnic conflict (Keethaponcalan 2011). Coming out of its self-imposed embargo on military cooperation with Sri Lanka, India supplied 'self-defence weapons' such as Indira-II military radars. It dispatched 265 Indian military personnel including radar technicians to assist the Sri Lankan military in its military campaign (Keethaponcalan 2011). India also supported Sri Lanka with intelligence including satellite information in relation to LTTE's maritime activities and thereby enabled the Sri Lankan Navy to destroy several LTTE vessels carrying war materials to Mullaitivu, the LTTE controlled coastal town in the north of Sri Lanka (Keethaponcalan 2011).

Moreover, India provided training to a vast number of Sri Lankan personnel belonging to the army, navy and air force. The Indian Air Force carried out several 'joint air-defense exercises with the view to countering the threat from the LTTE's air capabilities' (Keethaponcalan 2011:63). Indian military high command visited the Vanni region, the war zone, to demonstrate its solidarity with Sri Lankan armed forces and to support their military campaign. Owing to the pressure from Tamil Nadu not to extend military support, India had "silent defense and intelligence cooperation with Sri Lanka without publicity" (Keethaponcalan 2011:64).

Enjoying numerous sources of supply and support from Asian countries, Sri Lanka dismissed the humanitarian and human rights concerns of the West and pursued its quest for military victory at any cost. It secured the political backing and blessing of powerful countries in the region, most notably India and China. With the support of Indian and US intelligence cooperation, the Sri Lankan Navy successfully intercepted LTTE shipments of military hardware in the Indian Ocean Region and cut off the LTTE's main supply channel. The fresh fighting between the government forces and the LTTE started over a dispute on water supply at Mavil Aru in the East. On 21 July 2006, the LTTE closed the sluice gates of the Mavil Aru and cut the water supply to villages in government controlled areas. Thereafter, on 26 July 2006, Sri Lankan Air Force fighter jets bombed several LTTE camps around Mavil Aru anicut (Philipson 2011). This led to the resumption of the fourth phase of armed conflict between the Sri Lankan military and the LTTE, called *Eelam War IV*.

With the assistance of Karuna who provided insightful information on the LTTE and Eastern terrain, the Sri Lankan military launched a major military operation in the East. As the geography was not suitable for defensive warfare, the LTTE retreated rather than fighting back. In July 2007, the Sri Lankan military took control of the entire Eastern region (Goodhand & Korf 2011). Afterwards, the main theatre of war shifted to the north (see figure 5). With the fall of the East, the constant supply of men and women to the LTTE ranks dried off. Since many countries proscribed the LTTE and took severe measures to cripple its fundraising and arms procurement networks, the arms supply dried off. At the same time, the Sri Lankan military enjoyed a constant supply of sophisticated weapons. The Sri Lankan armed forces took the upper-hand in the northern theatre of war and soon made inroads into the Vanni mainland, the LTTE stronghold.

Having realized the changing nature of the war, on 02 January 2008, the Government of Sri Lanka terminated the ceasefire agreement. Thereafter, the SLMM withdrew its monitors from the country (Goodhand & Korf 2011). The government also requested non-governmental organizations and media personnel from the Vanni region to move out and conducted the war without witnesses. In January 2009, the Sri Lankan military captured Kilinochchi, the LTTE's *de facto* capital. The LTTE along with an estimated 300,000 civilians retreated eastward to Mullaitivu (Sorbo *et al.* 2011). It was cornered into an ever-shrinking land (see figure 5). Fearing a humanitarian crisis, the international community called for a ceasefire to extricate civilians from the war zone. Knowing very well that it was fighting a losing battle,

the LTTE continued its forceful recruitment of children and deployed them in their front defense lines (FDLs) after a week of training (Sorbo *et al.* 2011). It is said that the LTTE used hundreds of thousands of civilians as human shields to halt the advances of the Sri Lankan military preventing them escaping from their controlled area. It is also said that the LTTE continued to fire from inside the No-Fire-Zones (NFZ) which the government unilaterally declared for the refuge of civilians (Sorbo *et al.* 2011).

It is believed that India scuttled the efforts of the US Pacific Command “to attempt a sea rescue of civilians trapped in the no fly zone” (de Alwis 2010:441). Sensing the military victory over the LTTE, the government refused to halt its fighting. Adopting the western discourses of humanitarian intervention and counter-terrorism, the government defended its military operation. Claiming that it was trying to liberate Tamil civilians from the clutches of the LTTE, the government stepped up its military operation. The LTTE, along with civilians, was finally boxed into a small strip of land called Mullivaikal at the Mullaitivu coast. Considering the safety of civilians, the international community exerted enormous pressure on the government to halt the fighting. A Sri Lankan diplomat points out that Asian powers encouraged the Sri Lankan government “to ignore western pressure and get it over with” (quoted in Sorbo *et al.* 2011:67). Another government official adds that the government had “hardly any reason to let the LTTE surrender or escape”, “to think twice before grabbing the cobra by its head, and maybe have trouble again for another twenty years” (quoted in Sorbo *et al.* 2011:68).

Although India expressed its concern about the safety of civilians trapped in the no fly zone, it seems that Indian military advisers were on the ground directing the war (Keethaponcalan 2011). After seeing the LTTE’s air capability, India might have decided to destroy the LTTE. Besides, Sonia Gandhi’s administration in India might have wished to avenge the killing of their Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi by the LTTE. At the same time, the Sri Lankan government perceived the civilians trapped in the war zone as staunch LTTE supporters. It might have wanted to see their demise. Driven by the quest for war victory, on 19 May 2009 the Sri Lankan military took control over the entire area, killing all senior LTTE leaders including Pirapaharan (Philipson 2011).

After successfully seeing off both Indian and Sri Lankan militaries for over three decades, the LTTE was in little more than three years virtually crushed, its territories lost, and its leaders

killed (Spencer 2011). It seems that the LTTE was the first victim of the shifting balance of power in Asia. It is clear that this military victory could not have been achieved without the active support of various countries. At the same time, one cannot take credit away from the Sri Lankan government for defeating the LTTE by bringing competing powers into line to support its war efforts through its sophisticated diplomacy. However, thousands of Tamils had paid the heavy price for this so-called war victory with their lives.

Although no firm overall evidence is available about the civilian death toll in the last three months of the war, the UN panel report states 40,000 as a credible figure (UN Panel of Experts Report 2011). One of the UN panel authors, Yasmin Sooka states the death toll in 2009 could possibly reach 75,000 (Harrison 2012). According to the Bishop of Mannar Rayappu Joseph, nearly 147,000 people have gone missing in the last phase of the war alone (Harrison 2012). It is clear that the number of deaths in the last phase of the war is definitely more than better-known events such as the massacre in Srebrenica and the ongoing war in Syria (Harrison 2012).

The United Nations Panel of Experts' report accuses both parties of having committed war crimes and crimes against humanity (UN Panel of Experts Report 2011). However, most Sinhalese deny that there were any war crimes committed by their army in 2009. At the same time, most Tamils deny the abuse by the LTTE of their own people. The disastrous end of the war appears to have polarized both communities more than ever before.

With the military defeat of the LTTE, Sri Lanka's civil war came to an end. Sri Lanka merely ended the fighting. With the absence of overt violence, Sri Lanka has only managed to achieve negative peace (Galtung 2008). Sri Lanka's new friends, China and some other Asian countries continue to extend their military, economic, and diplomatic support, and shield Sri Lanka from western interference. Under their tutelage, President Rajapaksa has consolidated his grip on power with the erosion of democracy and human rights. In the post-war period, Rajapaksa has failed to make any meaningful efforts to address the root causes of the conflict. In reality, post-war Sri Lanka fails to move from negative peace to positive peace.

Post-War Sri Lanka

5.1. The Present Situation in Sri Lanka

With the death of most of the top military and political leaders of the LTTE in battle in May 2009, the civil war came to an end. Many thousands of LTTE fighters and sympathizers surrendered to the Sri Lankan military. Nearly 280,000 survivors of the war were locked up in internment camps surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by armed soldiers (Harrison 2012). The military continued its mopping-up operations arresting remaining LTTE cadres who chose not to surrender. The military singled out suspected LTTE cadres from refugees and took them to secret locations. Even after the war, the killing did not stop. It is said that summary executions, gang rape and torture continued even a year after the end of the war (Harrison 2012). It seems that the military got rid of the senior LTTE cadres and its ardent supporters in order to prevent the possible re-emergence of violent Tamil ethno-nationalism.

After the end of the war, the international community took up human rights issues and stepped up their efforts to press the Sri Lankan government to address the root causes of the conflict expressing concern for a concrete programme of post-conflict reconciliation. Within four days of the war ending, Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State telephoned President Rajapaksa to personally appeal for political reconciliation, and the speedy resettlement of displaced Tamil civilians, stressing the need for post-war power-sharing with the Tamils (Uyangoda 2009). The international community seemed to have been concerned with three key issues: 1) early resettlement of displaced Tamil civilians; 2) provisions for speedy humanitarian aid to civilians with international assistance, participation and monitoring; and 3) implementation of devolution (Uyangoda 2009).

Against this backdrop, tension mounted between the Government of Sri Lanka and key international actors including the US, EU, and UN over allegations of war crimes and human rights violations. Many of the battles over conflict-related norms between Sri Lanka and the West took place primarily in the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). A group of western countries called a special session of the UNHRC in the third week of May 2009 to discuss allegations of civilian killings (de Alwis 2010). They eventually passed a resolution accusing both parties of having committed acts of war crimes. As a counter measure, Sri Lanka passed a counter-resolution in support of its actions with the support of India, Russia, South Africa

and a majority of the Asian, African, and Latin American members of the UNHRC (Lewis 2010). With the support of Russia, China virtually blocked all efforts to place the Sri Lankan crisis formally on the Security Council agenda (de Alwis 2010).

In October 2009, the US State Department's Office of War Crimes Issues submitted its report to Congress alleging serious violations of international humanitarian law by both parties (Uyangoda 2009). The EU also came up with its own report criticizing Sri Lanka's human rights record. The report opposed extending the Generalised System of Preferences Plus (GSP+) facilities to Sri Lanka. The GSP+ provisions offer locally manufactured goods concessionary access to the EU market directly benefiting Sri Lanka's apparel industry (Uyangoda 2009). In November 2009, a group of western countries opposed Sri Lanka's bid to host the Commonwealth Summit in 2011. Consequently, Sri Lanka engaged in repeated showdowns with the West.

The standoff with the West put Sri Lanka into a kind of diplomatic isolation. As a result of this diplomatic friction, Sri Lanka further moved away from the West and increased its closeness with Asian and Middle Eastern countries. At home, President Rajapaksa consolidated his regime and his personal authority over the election. Seeking to benefit from the enormous popularity his regime enjoyed in the wake of the war victory, Rajapaksa called for an early presidential election. In the presidential election in January 2010, he defeated his rival and his former army commander General Fonseka by a big margin (Uyangoda 2010). His victory indicated that Rajapaksa, the winner had "most of his support base concentrated in Sinhalese-majority districts" (Uyangoda 2010:132). Following his massive election victory, President Rajapaksa had his challenger arrested on charges of military indiscipline. With Fonseka under arrest, the divided opposition lost much of its momentum during the parliamentary election campaign (Uyangoda 2010).

In the parliamentary election held in April 2010, Rajapaksa and his UPFA coalition won unprecedented majority, almost exclusively in the Sinhalese-dominated electoral districts. This election result belied the earlier assumption that minority support was necessary for any Sinhalese national party to win majority in the parliamentary elections (Goodhand & Korf 2011). At the same time, in the Tamil-majority Northern and Eastern Provinces, the TNA emerged victorious, winning most seats. Being elected exclusively by the Sinhalese, President Rajapaksa fully chartered the Sinhalese nationalist ideology and redefined the

ethnic conflict. Since the LTTE is no more in the equation, Rajapaksa's regime views that there is no ethnic conflict that needs to be addressed urgently (Uyangoda 2010). First of all, his regime is highly committed to preserving the unitary, centralized nature of the Sri Lankan state. More importantly, he presides over a coalition of Sinhalese nationalist parties totally opposed to any measure of devolution to the Tamils. Second, his Sinhalese constituencies in the South are not calling for a constitutional reform or a greater autonomy for the Tamils. Third, his military victory over the LTTE, which had appeared undefeatable, has hardened the stance of many Sinhalese in relation to the ethnic conflict (Uyangoda 2010).

Rajapaksa's regime seems to think that regional autonomy to the Tamils may push them more down the path of separatism. Taking his cue from the approach of Russian strategists in Chechnya and the strategy of the Israeli military in the Palestinian Territories which tend to downplay the concept of root causes and focus instead on conflict management, Rajapaksa's administration appears to maintain a military regime in Tamil areas that would not resolve the ethnic conflict but prevent the re-emergence of the Tamil insurgency as a security threat to the Sinhalese state (Lewis 2010). Following the conflict management strategy, Sri Lanka has deployed 16 out of its 19 military divisions in the North and East, the Tamil-dominated regions (Subramanian 2012). Since the Army is entirely Sinhalese, the continued military presence in Tamil areas seems to have hampered post-war ethnic reconciliation. Moreover, this new culture of conflict management undermines both the rule of law and political pluralism in the country.

Despite verbal commitment to a political solution, President Rajapaksa is continuously foot-dragging on this issue. He seems to have given up his efforts of abolishing a presidential form of government and devolving power from the centre to the peripheries. On the contrary, his regime passed the 18th Amendment to the Constitution in September 2010 strengthening the president's dictatorial powers and control over the country's political institutions (Uyangoda 2010). This amendment removed the constitutional barrier to the re-election of the president for more than two consecutive terms. Despite being an undemocratic reform, Rajapaksa's regime defended it as a necessary move to advance the country in the post-war era (Uyangoda 2010). Claiming to find a home-grown ethnic reconciliation and democratization, the president appeared to steer the country in an unknown direction.

As Sri Lanka failed to set up an institutional mechanism for accountability, Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General proposed a UN panel to advise him on what measures could be taken to ensure accountability in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka strongly objected to this idea criticising it as an unwarranted interference in the internal matters of a sovereign member state of the UN. Despite staunch opposition from Sri Lanka, Ban finally appointed the three-member advisory panel in June 2010 (Sriskandarajah 2012). China could not block this move as it did not require the Security Council voting. The UN panel report, also referred as the Darusman Report, after the name of the chairman of the panel (Indonesian politician Marzuki Darusman) was published in March 2011 (Sriskandarajah 2012). The report states that both parties have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity. It assesses that as many as 40,000 civilians may have been killed in the final months of the war, most as a result of indiscriminate shelling by the Sri Lankan military (Harrison 2012). It calls for an independent international investigation into the alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed by both parties.

The US and the UN viewed that an investigation into excesses committed during the war would allow the conflicting parties to come to terms with the past in an open and transparent way. Critical of this view, Rajapaksa's regime stressed that such a policy was not suitable to states like Sri Lanka that were 'victims of internal terrorism' (Uyangoda 2010:135). In the midst of straining relations with the West, in May 2010, President Rajapaksa appointed his own commission called the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) "to inquire into the political and humanitarian events between 2002 and 2009 and make recommendations to prevent the recurrence of such events in the future" (Uyangoda 2010:136). The LLRC had no mandate to investigate the crimes committed during the war. It largely lacked independence and failed to meet minimum international standards to offer protection to witnesses. On 16 December 2011, the LLRC report was made public, after being tabled in parliament. The commission seemed to blame everything on the LTTE and completely exonerated the Sri Lankan military (Sriskandarajah 2012). However, it made some positive recommendations on resettlement, land issues, and devolution.

Rajapaksa's regime made continuous verbal commitment to implement the recommendations of its own LLRC report. However, it had not taken any substantial effort to implement it. In keeping with Kenneth Waltz's discussion on state strategies to maximize their benefits (Lamy 2006), on 22 March 2012 the US brought a resolution on Sri Lanka at the UNHRC to make

Sri Lanka toe the line (Pattanaik 2012). After being diluted by India, the US-sponsored resolution was passed. The resolution calls upon Sri Lanka to implement its own findings and recommendations made in its report of the LLRC. It also calls for the initiation of credible and independent actions to ensure justice, equity, accountability and reconciliation for all Sri Lankans (Pattanaik 2012).

In reality, Sri Lanka has not done much to ensure justice, equality, accountability and reconciliation for the Tamils, the people most affected by the war. More than three years after the end of the war, Rajapaksa's regime still maintains a heavy military presence in the North and East (Sriskandarajah 2012). Increased militarization and military's intervention in civilian life are continuing unabatedly. Para-military forces are still operating with impunity causing abductions, demanding ransom and even carrying out killings (Sumanthiran 2012). Many political prisoners and former LTTE cadres are still detained without trial. The military is still occupying large segments of civilian lands, public places and harbours classifying them as High Security Zones –HSZs (Kumara 2012; The Indian Express 2012). This affects the livelihood of the Tamils. The military has imposed fishing bans on seas around the HSZs. The resettlement and rehabilitation of the Internally Displaced Persons continue to be snail-paced with several thousands of displaced people still in the camps and many more tens of thousands in transit camps and with friends and relatives (Sumanthiran 2012).

In the name of development, the Sri Lankan government has been carrying out a massive structural change in the North and East through the forceful acquisition of civilian lands, Sinhalese settlements, building of permanent military cantonments, acquiring trade and commercial locations, changing name boards to all-Sinhala names, building Buddhist shrines, erecting statues of Buddha, claiming ancient Tamil Buddhist sites as Sinhalese Buddhist sites, and the likes (Herath 2012). Although state-aided Sinhalese colonization in Tamil areas had taken place before and during the war, it has intensified after the end of the war. These state-aided Sinhalese settlements are fast changing the demographic composition of the North and East. For example, in 1953 the ethnic composition of the East was: Tamils -47.4%, Sinhalese -13.1%, and Muslims -37.7% (Wilson 2000). The demographics of the East are currently as follows: Tamils -40%, Sinhalese -25%, and Muslims -35% (David 2012).

Despite holding periodic elections, the democratic culture is largely undermined. The freedom of the media and civil society is restricted by repeated attacks on media personnel

and civil society activists. The judiciary is in tatters. The NGOs are not allowed to operate freely (Kumara 2012). The government has failed to hold the Provincial Council election and hand over the administration to civilians in the North. The recent elections for the Eastern Provincial Council clearly demonstrate that the TNA would score a massive victory in any Tamil majority areas (David 2012). Since the North is a Tamil majority region, it seems that the government would not hold elections as promised because it would not want the TNA coming to power.

The peace talks between the government and the TNA have remained suspended. The government blames the TNA for the failure of the talks. It also accuses the TNA of behaving like the LTTE – laying down conditions and setting deadlines. To start the bilateral talks, the government has asked the TNA to join the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) appointed to find a solution to the country's national problem (Sumanthiran 2012). Since the PSC is largely constituted by chauvinistic Sinhalese parties, the TNA refuses to join the PSC until it reaches an understanding with the government about the direction of the PSC (Sumanthiran 2012). It seems that the government unfairly blames the TNA for its unwillingness to evolve a political solution.

More importantly, the government had given repeated assurances to the international community in general and to India in particular that it would find a solution to the conflict by implementing the 13th Amendment in full and going beyond it. Having given up those assurances, it is making efforts to repeal the 13th Amendment to the Constitution (Fernando 2012). The 13th Amendment was made in accordance with the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 to devolve political powers to provinces. Under this arrangement, provincial councils were established to exercise devolved powers. In practice, provincial councils have been ultimately turned into “an extended arm of the central government” (Wijesinghe 2012). This demonstrates the fact that the government is not even prepared to devolve this fraction of power to the Tamils.

Besides, Sri Lanka has submitted its National Action Plan (NAP) to implement the LLRC recommendations for the upcoming Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UNHRC in November 2012 (Bateman 2012). Many in the West view the NAP with skepticism since it contains misleading, inaccurate and disingenuous information. Human Rights Watch has described the NAP as a plan of inaction (Sriskandarajah 2012). It appears that Sri Lanka has

not come up with a substantial and precise action plan to address the issue of accountability or the establishment of a credible domestic mechanism to investigate alleged war crimes.

Growing Chinese economic, military and diplomatic support can be mainly attributed to the continuing defiance of Sri Lanka to address the root causes of the conflict. Ever since the war ended, China has deepened its cooperation with Sri Lanka in various fields. China has emerged as the largest aid donor to Sri Lanka and the single largest weapons-exporting country to Sri Lanka (Samaranayake 2011). Bilateral trade has grown faster. China has become the leading international partner for the development of the island. It has invested heavily in infrastructural support system such as railway and road networks. It has given outright gifts such as the Supreme Court Complex, the Central Telecommunication Exchange, and the Lady Ridgeway Children's Hospital (de Alwis 2010). It has built the National Performance Arts Theatre as a mark of friendship. It has invested in the Norochcholai power plant, the largest commercial project between both countries (Samaranayake 2011). It is engaged in the development of Phase II of the Hambantota port and assisting in constructing army camps in the North. It is creating Mirigama Exclusive Economic Zone, which is the first time Sri Lanka has given a foreign country "a specific area to develop and attract foreign investment into the country" (Samaranayake 2011:126).

China has awarded Sri Lanka dialogue partner status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which reflects the island's growing importance to China. Moreover, China is given the rights to prospect for oil and gas in the Gulf of Mannar in the northwest coast of the island (de Alwis 2010). It seems that this semi-permanent presence of the Chinese would bring them within monitoring distance of "India's fast-breeder reactor complex at Kalpakam near Chennai, the Russian-aided Koodankulam nuclear power reactor complex in southern Tamil Nadu and India's space establishments in Kerala" (de Alwis 2010:437). Some analysts argue that these are commercial projects and both the US and India do not need to worry about them unnecessarily. This argument sounds hollow, because China has a deep desire for greater security ties with Sri Lanka and other South Asian nations as a response to the increasing American strategic security profile in the Asia-Pacific region. This is evident in China's Defence Minister General Liang Guanglie's visit to Sri Lanka in August 2012 and subsequent Chinese military participation in the Sri Lanka joint service exercise, Cormorant III in Eastern Vakarai (Hariharan 2012). Although PLA Navy lacks maritime capabilities at present, it is expected that it would increase its military muscle in the near

future and enlarge its presence in the IOR to safeguard China's security interests which are growing globally. It is certainly a cause for alarm for the US and India. Besides, Chinese commercial ventures are eating into Indian space in Sri Lanka.

Looking for investment and trade opportunities in the region, Indian companies are increasingly investing in local economic sectors in Sri Lanka from the petroleum industry to the IT sector, and competing with international actors to share the Sri Lankan market (Keethaponcalan 2011). As a result, India is compelled to protect its business and trade interests in Sri Lanka. At the same time, the ever-increasing Chinese presence in Sri Lanka is posing greater security threats to India as its strategic assets are placed in South India in general and in Tamil Nadu, the most peaceful state in India, in particular. More importantly, China's assistance helps Sri Lanka to defy international pressure to find a political solution to the ethnic conflict, and encourages it to subjugate the Tamils under military rule. It seems that these developments have serious security repercussions and spillover effects in Tamil Nadu (Keethaponcalan 2011). More importantly, Sri Lanka's treatment of Tamils is inciting Tamil nationalism. It may also rekindle the secessionist movement in Tamil Nadu if India fails to resolve the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

For India, Tamil Nadu possesses the second largest economy among states in India, and is also the second most industrialised state next to Maharashtra (Bapat, Chaturvedi, Drewery, Fei & Hepfer 2012). It has the largest number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in India. It is a home for many heavy engineering and manufacturing-based companies (Bapat *et al.* 2012). As a result, Tamil Nadu is nicknamed as the Detroit of South Asia. It is clear that Tamil Nadu plays a vital role in the economic growth of India. Moreover, the central government of India relies on the support of Tamil Nadu's political parties (Parashar 2012). Although the political leaders of Tamil Nadu use the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict for their own advantage, it seems that they are genuinely concerned about the plight of the Tamils in Sri Lanka (Hariharan 2012). For all these reasons, India cannot ignore the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict and continually calls for a speedy resolution to the conflict.

Ever since India voted in favour of a US-sponsored UNHRC resolution against Sri Lanka, the ties between India and Sri Lanka have soured. Sri Lanka's effort to scrap the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, a product of the Indo-Lanka Accord, has knocked relations to an all-time low (The Times of India 2012). This has come at a time when Sri Lanka's

human rights record will be reviewed in November 2012 by the UPR, with India being one of the three countries that will carry it out (Sriskandarajah 2012). As a result, it is expected that India may come out harder against Sri Lanka at the UNHRC where China is no more a member.

As neo-realism argues, states are concerned about their own security (Lamy 2006). Like India, the US is also concerned about Chinese soft power projection in Sri Lanka. The report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in December 2009 states that the US “cannot afford to lose Sri Lanka” presumably to China (Samaranayake 2011:123). It seems that the US will not take its eyes off from Sri Lanka as it has shifted its focus to Asia to curb the growing Chinese influence in the region. As a result, the US remains engaged on Sri Lanka even three-and-a-half years after the war ended. Robert Blake, the US Assistant Secretary of State has pointed out that despite having so many other problems around the world, a consistent level of US engagement on Sri Lanka would continue (Wijedasa 2012). The US continues to call on Sri Lanka to hold Northern Provincial Council elections as soon as possible and to resume talks with the TNA to find a political solution to the conflict. It continues to pressurize on everything from human rights, elections and rule of law to accountability, demilitarization and devolution (Wijedasa 2012). To force Sri Lanka to toe the line, the US would continue to take up the human rights issue against Sri Lanka. This has resulted in a worsening relationship with Sri Lanka.

During the war, Sri Lanka had better handled conflicting and competing regional and extra-regional powers and extracted maximum from them by playing one off against the other. In the post-war period, Sri Lanka finds it difficult to handle major powers. Cracks have already appeared on the surface of its bilateral relations with the US and India. The US interest in Sri Lanka would continue in the same form and manner regardless of the outcome of the US election (Wijedasa 2012). India would step up pressure for a political solution. At present, President Rajapaksa has emerged as an unchallenged leader and the Tamils have limited leverage over him. However, the Sri Lankan economy is in steep decline and the pain has begun to hit the rural people. Ever since Rajapaksa came to power in 2005, not a single factory has been built in Sri Lanka by foreign investors (David 2012). This tells the tale of investor confidence on the island. Chinese money is pouring into infrastructure for vested interests of China in Sri Lanka. The war victory alone will not forever keep Rajapaksa in power. His fortunes are likely to decline over the next two years. Moreover, China cannot

continue to shield Sri Lanka from sustained international pressure for a political solution. There is a lingering hope for peace on the horizon.

The Norwegian facilitated peace talks could not succeed in bringing a lasting peace in the island. The shift in global distribution of power upset the balance of power between the parties in Sri Lanka and created a congenial condition for war. Sri Lanka slowly slipped from a situation of no war-no peace into an escalating shadow war and finally into full-scale war (Lewis 2010). With the destruction of the LTTE, Sri Lanka brought an end to the three-decade-old civil war. In the absence of violence, Sri Lanka has merely managed to attain negative peace. Despite having the opportunity to transform negative peace into positive peace, Sri Lanka has failed to make any meaningful efforts in this respect. By adopting the strategy of conflict management, Sri Lanka tries to prevent the re-emergence of the Tamil insurgency instead of addressing the root causes of the conflict. Sri Lanka still faces the prospects of sliding back into violence. The question is how positive peace can be built in Sri Lanka.

Conclusion & Recommendations

6.1 Prospects of Peace

Enjoying cordial relations, the Sinhalese and the Tamils, the two founding races of the island had lived side by side over millennia until the Sinhalese developed a distinct consciousness of themselves as a people by the tenth century C.E (Tambiah 1991). Numerous South Indian invasions and occupation of the island in the eleventh century consolidated Sinhalese group identity. It was only after the advent of colonialism that the Sinhalese consciousness underwent a radical transformation (Tambiah 1991). Thereafter their relations soured. The British colonial rule and their divide-and-rule policies drove a wedge between both communities. When Britain left the island on 4 February 1948, it handed over power to the Sri Lankan people, the majority of whom are Sinhalese, and imposed its colonial constitution with no explicit minority guarantees (Wilson 2000).

The Tamils opted to stay within a united island and find their place there. They viewed themselves as equal partners of the Sinhalese, whereas the latter viewed the former as historic adversaries (Wilson 2000). Despite the Sinhalese being a numerical majority in the island, they failed to accommodate the Tamils. Having taken the mantle of power, Sinhalese leaders gradually jettisoned the meritocracy and liberal democracy, and instead instituted an ethnic outbidding culture, which generated a pernicious ethnocracy. Taking advantage of their parliamentary majority, Sinhalese leaders pursued the path of favouring the rights of their people instead of paying attention to the grievances of the minority communities (Gunasingam 2008). Using historical myths, Sinhalese leaders indulged in ethnic outbidding and sought to impose ethnocentric policies which undermined polyethnic coexistence.

As discussed in previous chapters, superficial minority guarantees, bad leadership, territorially-based ethnic divisions, socioeconomic grievances, and a defanged minority encouraged an ethnic outbidding culture in Sri Lanka (DeVotta 2004). Having stereotyped the Tamils as passive, Sinhalese leaders felt that there was little the Tamils could do to counter their discriminatory politics. They underestimated the consequences of ethnic outbidding and employed ethnocentric policies. The Sinhala Only Act, subsequent anti-Tamil riots, continued colonization of Tamil lands, discrimination in resource allocation to Tamil areas, discriminatory university policies, unfair employment policies, anti-Tamil rhetoric, military occupation of Tamil areas, military violence against the Tamils, and an ethnocentric

constitution, previous deceptions, deep-seated mistrust, non-implementation of agreements – all had coalesced to encourage Tamil militarism (Balasingham 2004).

For Sinhalese leaders, the interests of the Sinhalese are national interests. For them, strengthening the unitary nature of the state will serve the interests of the Sinhalese and preclude the Tamils separating the country. As the neo-realist concept of security explains, state actors select their strategies to strengthen their national security (Lamy 2006). Similarly, Sinhalese leaders had in every instance reconfigured political institutions to strengthen the unitary nature of the state. They left the Tamils out of the process of constitution making and formed the two post-independence constitutions of 1972 and 1978 (Sumanthiran 2012). They failed to incorporate minority grievances. The present 1978 constitution effectively gives the president dictatorial powers. Having given dictatorial powers to the president, the current constitution has undermined liberal democracy and human rights in the island. Moreover, the current ethnocentric constitution alienated minority communities, and plunged the country eventually into civil war. The Tamils, who had initially opted for ethnic cohabitation (1948-56), gradually increased their demand for federalism (1956-72) and then for soft separatism (1972-83). Finally, the LTTE waged a war for independence over three decades (Wilson 2000).

During the Eelam War-IV, the Sri Lankan state played one power off against the other and extracted maximum assistance from all of them for its war efforts. With the support of various external powers, the LTTE was finally defeated and its leadership was almost wiped out in May 2009. Following the war victory, Rajapaksa's regime moved away from the West and strengthened its ties with Asian countries in general and China in particular, to avert western pressure for justice, equity, accountability, democratic reform and reconciliation (Uyangoda 2011). Rather than using his vast majority in parliament to push for a credible devolutionary arrangement that would appease the Tamils, President Rajapaksa has adopted a conflict management strategy, trying to prevent the re-emergence of the Tamil insurgency as a security threat to the Sinhalese state (Lewis 2010). He also spends 20 per cent of the national budget on defence (Jane's Information Group 2012). This seems to validate the argument of democratic peace theory that weak democracies do not have the best record for handling internal conflict non-violently (Baylis 2006). At the same time, Sri Lanka cannot continue to spend such a large percentage of the budget on national defence at the expense of

education, health care and development since it is a small middle-income country. Maintaining a large military in the former war zone is not a viable option.

History shows that people, feeling betrayed, victimized and subjugated, will begin to fight back more passionately (Wilson 2000). This will especially be the case if those people are territorially based. Since the Tamils are a territorially based minority, they may be re-radicalized if they are continually suppressed. In the 1980s, India tactically armed Tamil militant organizations including the LTTE to force Sri Lanka to toe the line (Harath 2002). Similarly, third parties with vested self-interests may do the same. Moreover, the TNA is canvassing the international community's support for the Tamils' legitimate rights. Despite political threats, TNA leaders are strongly raising their voices in parliament on key issues and staging passive protest campaigns against the military atrocities in Tamil areas (Hariharan 2012).

More importantly, the TNA is well supported by the increasingly prosperous Tamil diaspora largely living in western countries. The Tamil diaspora, exceeding a million people, is prone to have an understandable nostalgia for its birthplace and does not forget its homeland (Fernando 2012). Having formed its organizations in various western capitals, it becomes more vocal for Tamil rights and distributes information through all the modern media of communication. Supporters air their grievances to their host governments and exert pressure on Sri Lanka for a political solution through their host governments (Fernando 2012). Moreover, they call for a global boycott of Sri Lankan goods and services which affects Sri Lankan economy. Their protest demonstrations in international capitals embarrassed Sinhalese leaders whenever they visited those capitals. Given the country's economic and military power, it is not a viable option for Sri Lanka to continue to pursue a conflict management strategy on the longer run. If Sri Lanka continues to suppress the Tamils, it will rekindle violent conflict in the island. This will not serve the interests of both communities. However, President Rajapaksa, committed to the unitary nature of the state, has failed to take any meaningful measures to address the root causes of the conflict and to implement the recommendations of its LLRC report.

The competition among regional and global powers such as India, China, and the US for supremacy in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) tremendously affects political events in Sri Lanka because of its strategic location. The persisting ethnic conflict offers them the

opportunities for acquiring influence in Sri Lanka. As such, these powers try to influence the resolution of the conflict in such a way that each of their own conflicting interests in the region are advanced, or at least not undermined (Sornarajah 2008). While providing economic assistance, India has started to pressurise Sri Lanka to address the root causes of the conflict, as what happens in Sri Lanka will have immediate fallout in India. In its effort to find a foot hold in Sri Lanka, China extends calculated support to authoritarian Rajapaksa's regime (Suriyanarayan 2012). As China does, India cannot afford to follow a foreign policy of opportunism, which would destabilise Tamil Nadu, the manufacturing hub of India, in the longer run.

To sustain its economic growth and expand its business interests, India needs to ensure a peaceful region. The persisting ethnic conflict would rekindle violence and thereby affect its business interests in Sri Lanka. Moreover, India cannot afford to have an alienated Tamil minority in its close neighbourhood (Suriyanarayan 2012). In keeping with Kenneth Waltz's discussion on how states protect themselves and promote their interests (Beckman 1995), India is calling for the demilitarization of Tamil areas, Northern Provincial Council elections, the democratization of the Sri Lankan polity, the implementation of the recommendations of the LLRC, the enforcement of the rule of law and freedom of expression, the resumption of talks and speedy resolution of the conflict. In its effort to bring Sri Lanka into its sphere of influence, India seemed to have taken its first step in the UNHRC by voting in favour of the US-sponsored resolution against Sri Lanka. In the wake of a growing rift with Sri Lanka, India may not blindly extend its support and shield Sri Lanka in the next UNHRC session in March 2013 (Parashar 2012). As neo-realists argue, constrained by the security dilemma, the US also remains engaged in Sri Lanka since it tries to curb the growing influence of China in the IOR. Moreover, along with India, it continues to call for justice, equity, democracy, accountability and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

Although Sri Lanka has still managed to stay ahead of the rest of South Asia in terms of economic growth, its economy is in steep decline. The growth rate has dropped from 8.3 to 6.7 percent (Xinhua 2012). Economic fallout in Europe coupled with the oil price hike and fiscal crisis have affected the Sri Lankan export. The simmering ethnic tension and perpetual conflict undermine investor confidence. The rising food prices have already started to hit the country's poor. The war victory alone would not keep Rajapaksa in power. It seems that China on its own cannot sustain the Sri Lankan economy. Although the Sri Lankan trade with

China is becoming more robust, India continues to be the largest trade partner. The apparel industry of Sri Lanka mainly exports to the US and Europe (Samaranayake 2012). This gives economic leverages to the US and India over Sri Lanka. It remains to be seen how much international pressure China-Sri Lanka bilateral ties could withstand. In the case of Sudan, China modified its ties with Sudan under the sustained pressure of the international community (Samaranayake 2012). It appears that it is not going to be easy for China to keep Sri Lanka off the agenda of major international forums. The combined pressure of the US and India may bring changes in China's approach towards Sri Lanka. As the proponents of neo-realism argue, the balance of power between states limits their behaviours and pushes them to negotiations (Lamy 2006). Similarly, when both India and the US contain the influence of China in the island, the Sri Lankan government is more likely to take a conciliatory approach towards the ethnic conflict and resume the talks with the TNA.

For a meaningful reconciliation between the Sinhalese and Tamils, the truth needs to be acknowledged. Without the truth, reconciliation and forgiveness are simply not possible. It appears that Rajapaksa's regime would not take any meaningful actions to ensure justice, equity, accountability and reconciliation for all Sri Lankans. At the 22nd session of the UNHRC, scheduled for March 2013, Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, is likely to submit a more critical report about Sri Lanka (Bateman 2012). The possibility for more resolute action at the UNHRC seems limited since the majority of the members are from Asia, Africa and Latin America (Bateman 2012). However, given the worsening relationships with Sri Lanka, India and the US are likely to tighten the screws on Sri Lanka at the UNHRC. There is an option for targeted economic sanctions as well.

By muzzling media freedom, eroding democracy and showing real contempt for the rule of law, it appears that President Rajapaksa tries to stay in power (Lewis 2010). He has even turned against the Sinhalese who criticize his reign. With the exit of General Sarath Fonseka, the wartime coalition of hardline Sinhalese forces has weakened (Uyangoda 2010). The continuing family rule by Rajapaksa along with his close family relatives has already created some fissures within the ruling coalition. Concerted international pressure coupled with the declining economy may eventually shift the balance of power in favour of moderate political forces in the next election. This would open the door for constitutional reform for conflict resolution and democratization. According to democratic peace theory, mature democracies uphold human rights, pluralism, and the rule of law, and accommodate ethnic diversity

through various forms of regional and local autonomy (Baylis 2006). The shift in the balance of power in favour of moderate political forces in Sri Lanka will create a congenial condition for strengthening democracy and resolving the current ethnocentric conflict. As democratic peace perspective advocates, strengthening democracy in Sri Lanka would help foster friendly relationships with the West. More importantly, democratization would achieve positive peace (positive peace involves actually addressing the root causes of the conflict).

Following the war victory, on the one hand, Sinhalese hardliners try to maintain the unitary nature of the state, which does not generate the impartial governance required for stability and polyethnic coexistence. On the other hand, hardliners among the Tamils are still calling for an independent Tamil Eelam (Uyangoda 2011). A separate Tamil state would not be viable since India is averse to the partitioning of Sri Lanka. Moreover, the demographic pattern of the North and East has changed, and the Sinhalese and Muslims are living with the Tamils (Dissanayaka 2004).

However, it is imperative to grant the Tamils widespread autonomy to avoid violent conflict flaring up again and to build positive peace in Sri Lanka. Given the territorially based ethnic division, granting the Tamils widespread autonomy is the best way to resolve the conflict. If the Bandaranayake-Chelvanayagam (B-C) Pact or the Senanayake-Chelvanayagam (S-C) Pact had been implemented, it would have contained the Tamils' grievances within their district councils. At present, both communities are more polarized than ever before. Two decades of Satyagraha struggle and three decades of armed struggle has solidified Tamil nationalism, which would not settle even for the Provincial Council based on the 13th Amendment. As the Tamils' grievances became aggravated over the decades, solutions that might have satisfied them in the 1950s, 1960s and even 1980s are now seen as too little, too late. With its military power, the LTTE had strong bargaining power during the war, but it did not have the backing of the international community. After the destruction of the LTTE, the Tamils lost their military power, but have earned the backing of the international community (Hariharan 2012). Therefore, believing that the Tamils' options are limited would bring unintended consequences.

Ever since the island gained independence, the Sinhalese have been in power and they never called for devolution for the provinces where they live in majority (Wilson 2000). Therefore,

the Tamils may settle for an arrangement in which the Northern and Eastern Provinces are merged and given widespread autonomy with fiscal, land and police powers. However, merging the Northern Province with Eastern Province now seems more difficult to do, given the large numbers of Sinhalese and Muslims settled in the latter (Herath 2002). Moreover, Muslim hardliners now demand autonomy for those enclaves where they are in large numbers. At the same time, the Sinhalese harbour fear that autonomy for Tamil areas may lead to the partition of the island (Herath 2002). This fear seems to be exaggerated. If an autonomy arrangement is sincerely implemented, the Tamils cannot call for an independent Tamil Eelam. The international community also would not support the idea of independence. Therefore, it is imperative that Muslim and Sinhalese concerns will need to be accommodated in any northeastern merger.

Besides, the present ethnocentric constitution gives primacy to Buddhism and the Sinhala language. It also gives dictatorial powers to the president and erodes democracy (Gunasingam 2008). Therefore, the current constitution should be reformed and power should be reinstituted in parliament. Moreover, clear-cut constitutional guarantees protecting minority interests should be institutionalized to preclude political parties engaging in ethnic outbidding. These measures would help build positive peace in Sri Lanka paving the way for the Sinhalese-Tamil coexistence. If positive peace is built, Sri Lanka could extricate itself from external interferences. Moreover, Sri Lanka could attract the Tamil diaspora's capital and skills which would expedite the country's development.

The Sri Lankan case affords three lessons. The first lesson stemming from the Sri Lankan case is that fighting for secession rarely ends in secession. The second lesson is that ethnic animosities are much more easily escalated than de-escalated. The third lesson the Sri Lankan case teaches is that political institutions are easier to break down than to build up.

Three-and-a-half years after the war ended, normalcy has not returned to the Tamil areas. The peace talks between the government and TNA still remain suspended (Harrison 2012). To prepare the ground and to ease the simmering tensions, the Sri Lankan government, the Tamils, and the international community have to make a few moves urgently. First, the Sri Lankan government should initiate independent and transparent investigation into alleged human rights violations and let all Sri Lankans know the truth. It is unrealistic to expect the survivors to put the war behind them, forget the past, and move on. There will be no

reconciliation and forgiveness without acknowledging the truth. Second, it should halt the Sinhalese colonization and militarization immediately in Tamil areas. This increases simmering tension between both communities and prevents reconciliation. Third, it should stop building war victory memorials and Buddhist shrines and statues. Erecting victory memorials in the very spot where thousands of Tamils are believed to have been killed deepens the division between both communities. Fourth, it should release all political prisoners and former fighters from jails.

For their part, Tamils in the diaspora should stop calling for a separate Tamil state on the island and instead use their funding towards re-building war ravaged infrastructure and supporting rehabilitation in the North and East. Second, the TNA should stay away from laying down conditions and setting deadlines that only serve to antagonize the Sri Lankan government. Given its limited leverage over President Rajapaksa, the TNA should persuade him and not confront him to find a negotiated settlement to the ethnic conflict. Third, the TNA should allay the fear of the Sinhalese people that autonomy for Tamil areas may lead to the partition of the island. Moreover, Tamil politicians could cooperate more closely with Sinhalese moderate leaders and civil society movements to promote pluralism and thus democracy and positive peace. Whereas Tamil civil society movements were muted under LTTE authoritarianism, Tamils should be encouraged to rebuild the voice of civil society. Fourth, Tamils in the diaspora should avoid calling for a global boycott of Sri Lankan goods and services which affects ordinary Sri Lankan people.

Similarly, the international community should step up its pressure for finding a just and a peaceful solution to the conflict. Without external pressure, Sri Lanka will not take any constructive measures to build positive peace. Moreover, all external powers should work together to achieve peace on the island.

With the destruction of the LTTE, the civil war came to an end. It has only brought negative peace in Sri Lanka. However, it has not been transformed into positive peace actually addressing the root causes of the ethnic conflict (Galtung 2008). It is true that long held popular perceptions and ethnic rivalries die hard. This will not justify the lack of progress in building positive peace. By destroying the LTTE, Sri Lanka has only tackled the symptom, not the root causes of the conflict. The military victory over the LTTE, which had appeared undefeatable, has hardened the stance of many Sinhalese in relation to the ethnic conflict

(Uyangoda 2011). Since President Rajapaksa presides over a coalition of Sinhalese nationalist parties that are opposed to any measure of devolution to the Tamils, his hands seem to have been tied in this matter. His Sinhalese constituencies in the South are neither calling for constitutional reform nor for greater autonomy for the Tamils (Uyangoda 2011). He also fears that regional autonomy to the Tamils may push them more down the path of separatism. Owing to all these factors, he appears to have put the issue of addressing the root causes of the conflict on the back burner. However, leaving the root causes of the ethnic conflict unaddressed for a long period may lead to the radicalization and militarization of Tamil youth. As a consequence of inaction, violent conflict could flare up again with greater vigor. This would have negative consequences for all Sri Lankans.

Vindicating the neo-realists' argument that states are self-interest oriented and rational actors selecting strategies to maximize benefits and minimize losses, China has been actively constructing a string of pearls in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) to secure its oil supply and to position itself as a countervailing presence to the US naval hegemony in the sea lines of communications (Samaranayake 2011). By building ports in the littoral states of the Indian Ocean, China has launched a concerted effort to encircle India as well. China's strategy of constructing the string of pearls in the region causes alarm for both the US and India. In keeping with Kenneth Waltz's discussion on states' concern for security (Lamy 2006), it seems that both the US and India have stepped up their efforts to check China. As a part of their strategy to curb the growing Chinese influence in Sri Lanka, both countries exert pressure on the Sri Lankan government to resume negotiations with the TNA to find a just solution to the ethnic conflict.

Since China extends its economic, military, political, and diplomatic support to Sri Lanka with no conditions attached, Rajapaksa's regime will not address the root causes of the conflict as long as it enjoys support from China. Kenneth Waltz's point on the balance of power is relevant here. As he argues, the balance of power pushes states towards negotiation. Rajapaksa's regime will resort to negotiation with the TNA only when the US and India together curtail Chinese influence in Sri Lanka. At present, China lacks maritime capabilities and remains far from having a naval base beyond Chinese waters (Samaranayake 2011). Hence, both the US and India could together harness the influence of China and exert pressure on Sri Lanka since both countries acting in unison have the wherewithal to do so (Hariharan 2012). If concerted pressure is exerted on Sri Lanka, Rajapaksa's regime will

change its course of action. In keeping with democratic peace theory's discussion on how mature democracies better handle internal conflict non-violently (Baylis 2006), Rajapaksa's regime would then have to make efforts to consolidate democracy and to accommodate the Tamils by granting them autonomy. Without concerted international pressure, therefore, Sri Lanka seems a most unlikely candidate for achieving positive peace.

6.2. References

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